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John Gibbons
1777—1851.

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THE

FAMILY LEGEND:

A TRAGEDY.

BY

JOANNA BAILLIE.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by James Ballantyne and Co.

FOR JOHN BALLANTYNE AND CO. HANOVER-STREET; AND LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME, PATERNOSTER-ROW, LONDON.

1810.

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BODLEIAN
JUL 1943
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TO

WALTER SCOTT, Esq.

WHOSE FRIENDLY ZEAL

ENCOURAGED ME TO OFFER IT TO THE NOTICE OF

MY INDULGENT COUNTRYMEN,

I INSCRIBE THIS PLAY.

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TO THE READER.

THE following Play is not offered to the Public as it is acted in the Edinburgh Theatre, but is printed from the original copy which I gave to that Theatre. It may suffer, perhaps, from my not having adopted some of the stage abridgments or alterations; but, as, at this distance, it was difficult for me to judge what part of these I could avail myself of with real advantage, my friends have thought it better that I should print it in its primitive state.

The story, from which I have taken the plot, was put into my hands in the year 1805, by the Hon. Mrs Damer, as a legend long preserved in the family of her maternal ancestors, which appeared to her well fitted to produce strong effect on the stage. Upon reading it, I thought so too: it was, besides, a story of my native land; and being at

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the time in quest of some subject for the drama, I seized upon it eagerly, and was glad to be permitted to make use of it. As my reader may probably wish to know how far in the following scenes I have strictly adhered to mine authority, I shall, with his leave, relate the substance of the story, a copy of which I have now upon my table.—In the 15th century, a feud had long subsisted between the Lord of Argyll and the Chieftain of Maclean; the latter was totally subdued by the Campbells, and Maclean* sued for peace, demanding, at the same time, in marriage, the young and beautiful daughter of Argyll. His request was granted, and the lady carried home to the island of Mull. There she had a son, but the Macleans were hostile to this alliance with the Campbells.—They swore to desert their chief if they were not suffered to put his wife to death, with her infant son, who was then at nurse, that the blood of the Campbells might not succeed to the inheritance of Maclean. Maclean resisted these threats, fearing the power and vengeance of Argyll; but at length fear for his own life, should he refuse the demands of his clan, made him yield to their fury, and he only drew from them a promise that they would not shed her blood. One dark winter night she was

* Called in the representation Duart.

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forced into a boat, and, regardless of her cries and lamentations, left upon a barren rock, mid-way between the coasts of Mull and Argyll, which, at high-water, is covered with the sea. As she was about to perish, she saw a boat steering its course at some distance; she waved her hand, and uttered a feeble cry. She was now upon the top of the rock, and the water as high as her breast, so that the boatmen mistook her for a large bird. They took her, however, from the rock, and, knowing her to be the daughter of Argyll, carried her to the castle of her father.*

The Earl rewarded her deliverers, and desired them to keep the circumstance secret for a time, during which he concealed her till he should hear tidings from Mull. Maclean solemnly announced her death to Argyll, and soon came himself with his friends, all in mourning, to condole with the Earl at his castle. Argyll received him, clad also in black. Maclean was full of lamentations; the Earl appeared very sorrowful; a feast was served with great pomp in the hall; every one took his place, while a seat was left empty on the right hand of Argyll; the door opened, and they beheld the

* The boat was commanded by her foster-father, who knew the cry of his *Dalt*, *i. e.* foster-daughter, and insisted they should pull in to the rock.

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Lady of Maclean enter, superbly dressed, to take her place at the table. Maclean stood for a moment aghast, when, the servants and retainers making a lane for him to pass through the hall to the gate of the castle, the Earl's son, the Lord of Lorne, followed him, and slew him as he fled. His friends were detained as hostages for the child, who had been preserved by the affection of his nurse.—"So far," says my copy of the legend, "the story is authentic, as delivered from age to age in ancient Gaelic songs; and it is likewise a tradition from generation to generation in the family of Argyll. The same authorities also add, that this deserving daughter of Argyll was rewarded for her sufferings by wedding, with her father's consent, an amiable young nobleman who adored her, and was mutually beloved. To this man her father had formerly refused her hand, disposing of her as a bond of union, to unite the warring clans of Argyll and Maclean."

Such is the substance of my story, with no circumstance of the smallest consequence omitted; and my reader will perceive I have deviated from it very slightly. In regard to the characters that people it, I was left, except in two instances, entirely to invention; viz. that of Argyll, who, in keeping secret the return of his daughter, &c. gives one the idea of a cautious and crafty man; and in that of Maclean,

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who, being said not to have consented at first to give up his wife for fear of the vengeance of his father-in-law, and afterwards to have done so for fear of losing his life, though with a promise drawn from the clan that they should not shed her blood, gives one the idea of a man cowardly and mean, but not savage, a personage as little fitted for the drama as one could well imagine. To make the Chief of Mull, therefore, somewhat interesting and presentable, and yet fit for the purposes of the story, has been the greatest difficulty I have had to contend with: a difficulty, I readily admit, which it required a more skilful hand to overcome. To have made him sacrifice his wife from jealousy, was a common beaten path, which I felt no inclination to enter; and, though it might have been consistent with his conduct in the first part of the story, would not, as I conceive, have been at all so with his conduct in the conclusion of it, when he comes to the castle of Argyll. To have made him rude, unfeeling, and cruel, and excited against her by supposing she was actually plotting his ruin at the instigation of her father, would only have presented us with a hard, bare, unshaded character, which takes no hold of our interest or attention. I have, therefore, imagined him a man of personal courage, brave in the field, but weak and timid in counsel, irresolute and unsteady in action; super-

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stitious, and easily swayed by others, yet anxious to preserve his power as chieftain; attached to his clan, attached to his lady, and of an affectionate and gentle disposition. I have never put him in the course of the play at all in fear of his life. The fear of being deserted by his clan, and losing his dignity as their chief, with the superstitious dread of bringing some terrible calamity upon the Macleans, are represented as the motives for his crime. These qualities, I supposed, might have formed a character, imperfect and reprehensible indeed to a deplorable degree, but neither uninteresting nor detestable. As to his telling a direct lie when the Earl questions him so closely about his wife's death, his whole conduct at the castle of Argyll, coming there in mourning as from a funeral, is an enacted lie; and it would have been very inconsistent with such conduct to have made him, when so hardly beset, hold out against this last act of degradation and unworthiness, which exhibits a lesson to every ingenuous mind more powerful than his death.

This character, however, the design of which I am doing what I can to defend, has not, I fear, been very skilfully executed; for, I understand, it has been pretty generally condemned; and when this is the case, particularly by an audience eminently disposed to be favourable, there must be a fault somewhere, either in design or execution. I must con-

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fess, I should wish this fault to be found in the last particular rather than the first: not for the sake of the play itself, which suffers equally in either case, but because there is a taste, that too generally prevails, for having all tragic characters drawn very good or very bad, and having the qualities of the superior personages allotted to them according to established heroic rules, by which all manner of cruelty, arrogance, and tyranny are freely allowed, while the slightest mixture of timidity, or any other of the tamer vices, are by no means to be tolerated. It is a taste, indeed, that arises from a nobleness in our nature; but the general prevalence of which would be the bane of all useful and natural delineation of character. For this reason, then, I would fain justify, if I could, the general design of Maclean's character, leaving the execution of it to the mercy of all who may do me the honour to bestow upon it any attention.

Had I not trusted to what Maclean and others, in the course of the play, assert of his personal courage, but brought out some circumstance in the cavern scene, before his spirits were cowed with superstitious dread, that would really have shewn it, his character, perhaps, would have appeared less liable to objection. It was my intention in that scene that he should have been supposed to leave the stage with his mind greatly subdued and bewil-

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dered, but not yet prevailed upon to give up his wife; leaving the further effects produced upon him by the seer of the Isle, which did prevail on him to take the oath demanded by his vassals, to be imagined by the audience; thinking it unsafe to venture such an exhibition upon the stage, lest it should have a ludicrous effect. But this my intention I must have badly fulfilled, since it has been, I believe, almost entirely overlooked. In the cavern scene, I doubt, I have foolishly bestowed more pains on the vassals than the laird. Some time or other, perhaps, if I am encouraged to do it, I will alter these matters; but then the talents of the first actor must be bestowed on Maclean, not on John of Lorne.

I beg pardon for having detained my reader so long with this character; and, to make amends for it, will not allow myself to say any more, either upon the conduct of the piece, or the other characters that belong to it.

A pleasanter part of my task remains behind; to express the deep and grateful sense I have of the very favourable—I must be permitted to say, affectionate reception this piece, which I have a pleasure in calling my Highland Play, has met with in my native land. It has been received there by an audience, who willingly and cordially felt that I belonged to them; and, I am well assured, had it

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been marred with more defects than it has, and I readily allow it has many, the favour so warmly bestowed upon it would have been but insensibly diminished. What belongs to me, therefore, is not triumph, but something far better. And could any one at this moment convince me that the work, by its own merit alone, had it come from the hand of a stranger, would have met with the same reception, I should give him little thanks for his pains. He might brighten, indeed, the tints of my imaginary wreath, but he would rob it of all its sweetness. I have truly felt upon this occasion the kindliness of kin to kin, and I would exchange it for no other feeling. Let my country believe, that whatever may hereafter happen to shade or enliven my dramatic path, I have already received from her what will enable me to hold on my way with a cheerful heart, and the recollection of it will ever be dear to me.

I cannot take leave of my reader without begging leave to offer my warmest acknowledgments to my friend Mr Scott, at whose desire, cheered with much friendly encouragement, I offered the Family Legend to the Edinburgh Theatre, and who has done more for its service than I could have done had I been upon the spot myself. They are also due to Mr Mackenzie for the very kind support he has given it; and Mr W. Erskine must

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permit me to mention my obligations to him for the interest he has taken in its success.

I must likewise beg that Mr Siddons and Mrs H. Siddons will accept my best thanks, for the great and successful exertions they have made in the two first characters in the play. To Mr Siddons I am doubly indebted, both as an able actor, and a diligent and friendly manager, who has taken great pains in adapting and preparing it for the stage.

To Mr Terry, and the other actors, I offer many thanks.

Hampstead,
March 19, 1810.

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THE

FAMILY LEGEND:

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

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PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

MACLEAN, *Chief of the Clan of that name*,		MR THOMPSON.
The EARL OF ARGYLL,		MR TERRY.
JOHN OF LORNE, *Son to* Argyll,		MR SIDDONS.
SIR HUBERT DE GREY, *friend to* Lorne,		MR PUTNAM.
BENLORA.	*The Kinsmen and chief Vassals of* Maclean.	MR ARCHER.
LOCHTARISH,		MR MASON.
GLENFADDEN,		MR VINING.
MORTON,		MR JONES.
DUGALD,		MR KELLY.

Piper, Fishermen, Vassals, &c.

WOMEN.

HELEN, *Daughter of* Argyll, *and Wife of* Maclean,	MRS H. SIDDONS.
ROSA,	MISS FENWICK.
Fisherman's Wife,	MRS NICOL.

SCENE *in the* Island of Mull, *and the opposite Coast, &c. and afterwards in* Argyll's *Castle.*

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IN FIVE ACTS.

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BENLORA,
LOCHTARISH,
GLENFADDEN,
} *The Kinsmen and chief Vassals of* Maclean.
MORTON.
DUGALD.
Piper, Fishermen, Vassals, &c.

WOMEN.

HELEN, *Daughter of* Argyll, *and Wife of* Maclean.
ROSA.
Fisherman's Wife.

SCENE *in the* Island of Mull, *and the opposite Coast, &c. and afterwards in* Argyll's *Castle.*

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PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY WALTER SCOTT, ESQ.

'Tis sweet to hear expiring summer's sigh,
Through forests tinged with russet, wail and die;
'Tis sweet and sad the latest notes to hear
Of distant music, dying on the ear;
But far more sadly sweet, on foreign strand,
We list the legends of our native land,
Linked as they come with every tender tie,
Memorials dear of youth and infancy.
Chief thy wild tales, romantic Caledon,
Wake keen remembrance in each hardy son;
Whether on India's burning coasts he toil,
Or till Acadia's * winter-fettered soil,
He hears with throbbing heart and moisten'd eyes,
And as he hears, what dear illusions rise!
It opens on his soul his native dell,
The woods wild-waving, and the water's swell,
Tradition's theme, the tower that threats the plain,
The mossy cairn that hides the hero slain;
The cot, beneath whose simple porch was told
By grey-hair'd patriarch, the tales of old,
The infant groupe that hush'd their sports the while,
And the dear maid who listen'd with a smile.

* Acadia, or Nova Scotia.

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The wanderer, while the vision warms his brain,
Is denizen of Scotland once again.
Are such keen feelings to the crowd confined,
And sleep they in the poet's gifted mind?
Oh no! For She, within whose mighty page
Each tyrant Passion shows his woe and rage,
Has felt the wizard influence they inspire,
And to your own traditions tuned her lyre.
Yourselves shall judge—whoe'er has raised the sail
By Mull's dark coast, has heard this evening's tale.
The plaided boatman, resting on his oar,
Points to the fatal rock amid the roar
Of whitening waves, and tells whate'er to-night
Our humble stage shall offer to your sight;
Proudly preferr'd, that first our efforts give
Scenes glowing from her pen to breathe and live;
More proudly yet, should Caledon approve
The filial token of a daughter's love.

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THE

FAMILY LEGEND.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *Before the Gate of Maclean's Castle, in the Isle of Mull: several Highlanders discovered crossing the Stage, carrying loads of Fuel; whilst* Benlora *is seen on one side, in the back Ground, pacing to and fro, and frequently stopping and muttering to himself.*

FIRST HIGHLANDER.

THIS heavy load, I hope, will be the last:
My back is almost broken.

SECOND HIGHLANDER.

Sure am I,
Were ev'ry beeve in Mull slain for the feast,
Fuel enough already has been stow'd
To roast them all: and must we still with burdens
Our weary shoulders gall?

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Enter MORTON.

MORTON.

Ye lazy lubbards!
Grumble ye thus?—Ye would prefer, I trow,
To sun your easy sides, like household curs,
Each on his dung-hill stretched, in drowsy sloth.
Fy on't! to grumble on a day like this,
When to the clan a rousing feast is giv'n,
In honour of an heir born to the chief—
A brave Maclean, still to maintain the honours
Of this your ancient race!

FIRST HIGHLANDER.

A brave Maclean indeed!—vile mongrel hound!
Come from the south, where all strange mixtures be
Of base and feeble! sprung of varlet's blood!
What is our race to thee?

SECOND HIGHLANDER, *(to* Morton.*)*

Thou'lt chew, I doubt not,
Thy morsel in the hall with right good relish,
Whether Maclean or Campbell be our lord.

MORTON.

Ungracious surly lubbards! in, I say,
And bring your burdens quicker. And, besides,

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Where is the heath and hare-bells, from the glen,
To deck my lady's chamber?

SECOND HIGHLANDER.

To deck my lady's chamber!

MORTON.

Heartless hounds!
Is she not kind and gentle? spares she aught
Her gen'rous stores afford, when you or yours
Are sick, or lack relief? Hoards she in chests,
When shipwreck'd strangers shiver on our coast,
Or robe or costly mantle?—all comes forth!
And when the piercing shriek of drowning mariners
Breaks through the night, up-starting from her couch,
To snatch, with eager haste, the flaming torch,
And from the tower give notice of relief,
Who comes so swiftly as her noble self?
And yet ye grumble.

FIRST HIGHLANDER.

Ay, we needs must own,
That, were she not a Campbell, fit she were
To be a queen, or ev'n the thing she is—
Our very chieftain's dame. But, in these towers,
The daughter of Argyll to be our lady!

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MORTON.

Out! mountain savages! is this your spite?
Go to!

SECOND HIGHLANDER.

Speak'st thou to us? thou Lowland loun!
Thou wand'ring pedlar's son, or base mechanic!
Com'st thou to lord it here o'er brave Macleans?
We'll carry loads at leisure, or forbear,
As suits our fancy best, nor wait thy bidding.
(Exeunt Highlanders *grumbling, and followed by* Morton.*)*

(Manet Benlora, *who now comes forward, and after remaining some time on the front of the stage, wrapt in thought, not observing Lochtarish, who enters behind him.)*

Heigh ho! heigh ho, the day!

LOCHTARISH.

How so? What makes Benlora sigh so deeply?

BENLORA, *(turning round.)*

And does Lochtarish ask? Full well thou know'st,
The battles of our clan I've boldly fought,
And well maintained its honour.

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LOCHTARISH.

Yes, we know it.

BENLORA.

Who dar'd, unpunish'd, a Maclean to injure?
Yea; he who dar'd but with a scornful lip
Our name insult, I thought it feeble vengeance
If steed or beeve within his walls were left,
Or of his holds one tower unruined stood.

LOCHTARISH.

Ay; who dared then to brave us?

BENLORA.

Thus dealt Benlora ev'n with common foes;
But in the warfare of our deadly feud,
When rung the earth beneath our bloody strife,
And brave Macleans brave Campbells boldly fronted,
(Fiends as they are, I still must call them brave,)
What sword more deeply drank the hated blood
Than this which now I grasp---but idly grasp.

LOCHTARISH.

There's ne'er a man of us that knows it not,
That swears not by thy valour.

BENLORA.

Until that fatal day, by ambush ta'en,

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And in a dungeon kept, where, two long years,
Nor light of day, nor human voice e'er cheer'd
My loneliness, when did I ever yield,
To ev'n the bravest of that hateful name,
One step of ground upon the embattled field---
One step of honour in the banner'd hall?

LOCHTARISH.

Indeed thou hast our noble champion been;
Deserving well the trust our chief deceas'd,
This chieftain's father, did to thee consign.
But when thou wert a captive, none to head us,
But he, our youthful lord, yet green in arms,
We fought not like Macleans; or else our foe,
By fiends assisted, fought with fiend-like power,
Far---far beyond the Campbells' wonted pitch.
Ev'n so it did befal:---we lost the day:---
That fatal day!——Then came this shameful peace.

BENLORA.

Ay, and this wedding; when, in form of honour
Conferr'd upon us, Helen of Argyll
Our sov'reign dame was made,---a bosom worm,
Nursed in that viper's nest, to infuse its venom
Through all our after race.
This is my welcome!
From dungeons freed, to find my once-loved home
With such vile change disgraced; to me more
hateful

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Than thraldom's murkiest den.---But to be loosen'd
From captive's chains, to find my hands thus bound!

LOCHTARISH.

It is, indeed, a vile and irksome peace.

BENLORA.

Peace, say they! who will bonds of friendship sign
Between the teeming ocean's finny broods,
And say, " Sport these upon the hither waves,
And leave to those that farther billowy reach ?"
A Campbell here to queen it o'er our heads,
The potent dame o'er quell'd and beaten men,
Rousing or soothing us, as proud Argyll
Shall send her secret counsel !---hold, my heart!
This, base degen'rate men !---this, call ye peace!
Forgive my weakness: with dry eyes I laid
My mother in her grave, but now my cheeks
Are, like a child's, with scalding drops disgrac'd.

LOCHTARISH.

What I shall look upon, ere in the dust
My weary head is laid to rest, heav'n knows,
Since I have lived to see Benlora weep.

BENLORA.

One thing, at least, thou ne'er shalt live to see—
Benlora crouching, where he has commanded.

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Go, ye who will, and crowd the chieftain's hall,
And deal the feast, and nod your grizzled heads
To martial pibrochs, play'd, in better days,
To those who conquer'd, not who woo'd their foes;
My soul abhors it.—On the sea-beat rock,
Remov'd from ev'ry form and sound of man;
In proud communion with the fitful winds
Which speak, with many tongues, the fancied words
Of those who long in silent dust have slept;
While eagles scream, and sullen surges roar—
The boding sounds of ill;—I'll hold my feast,—
My moody revelry.

LOCHTARISH.

Nay, why so fierce?
Think'st thou we are a tame and mongrel pack?
Dogs of true breed we are, though for a time
Our master-hound forsakes us.—Rouse him forth
The noble chace to lead: his deep-toned yell
Full well we know; and for the opening sport
Pant keenly.

BENLORA.

Ha! is there amongst ye still
Spirit enough for this?

LOCHTARISH.

Yes, when good opportunity shall favour.

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Of this, my friend, I'll speak to thee more fully
When time shall better serve.
Maclean, thou know'st,
Is of a soft, unsteady, yielding nature;
And this, too well, the crafty Campbell knew,
When to our isle he sent this wily witch
To mould, and govern, and besot his wits,
As suits his crafty ends.—I know the youth:
This dame or we must hold his will in thraldom:
Which of the two,—But softly: steps approach.
Of this again.

BENLORA.

As early as thou wilt.

LOCHTARISH.

Then be it so: some staunch determined spirits
This night in Irka's rocky cavern meet;
There must thou join us. Wear thou here the while
A brow less cloudy, suited to the times.

Enter GLENFADDEN.

See, here comes one who wears a merry face;
Yet, ne'ertheless, a clan's-man staunch he is,
Who hates a Campbell, worse than Ilcom's monks
The horned fiend.

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BENLORA.

Ha! does he so? *(turning graciously to* Glenfadden.)
Glenfadden!
How goes it with thee?—Joyous days are these—
These days of peace.

GLENFADDEN.

These days of foul disgrace!
Com'st thou to cheer the piper in our hall,
And goblets quaff to the young chieftain's health,
From proud Argyll descended?

BENLORA, *(smiling grimly.)*

Yes, Glenfadden,
If ye will have it so; not else.

GLENFADDEN.

Thy hand—
Thy noble hand!—thou art Benlora still.
(Shaking Benlora *warmly by the hand, and then turning to* Lochtarish.)
Know ye that banish'd Allen is return'd—
Allen of Dura?

LOCHTARISH.

No; I knew it not.
But in good time he comes.—A daring knave:

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He will be useful. *(After considering.)*
Of Maclean we'll crave
His banishment to cancel; marking well
How he receives it. This will serve to shew
The present bent and bearing of his mind.
(After considering again.)
Were it not also well, that to our council
He were invited, at a later hour,
When of our purpose we shall be assured?

GLENFADDEN.

Methinks it were.

LOCHTARISH.

In, then; now is our time.

BENLORA.

I'll follow thee, when I a while have paced
Yon lonely path, and thought upon thy counsel.
(Exeunt Lochtarish *and* Glenfadden *into the Castle, and* Benlora *by the opposite side.)*

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Castle.*

Enter MORTON *and* ROSA, *speaking as they enter.*

ROSA.

Speak with my lady privately?

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MORTON.

Ay, please ye:
Something I have to say, regards her nearly.
And though I doubt not, madam, your attachment---

ROSA.

Good Morton, no apology: thy caution
Is prudent; trust me not till thou hast prov'd me.
But oh! watch o'er thy lady with an eye
Of keen and guarded zeal! she is surrounded---
(Looking round the room.)
Does no one hear us?—O those baleful looks
That, from beneath dark surly brows, by stealth,
Are darted on her by those stern Macleans!
Ay; and the gestures of those fearful men,
As on the shore in savage groups they meet,
Sending their loosen'd tartans to the wind,
And tossing high their brawny arms, where oft,
In vehement discourse, I have, of late,
At distance mark'd them.—Yes; thou shakest thy head:
Thou hast observed them too.

MORTON.

I have observed them oft. That calm Lochtarish,
Calm as he is, the growing rancour fosters:
For, fail the offspring of their chief, his sons
Next in succession are. He hath his ends,

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For which he stirs their ancient hatred up;
And all too well his dev'lish pains succeed.

ROSA.

Too well indeed! The very bed-rid crones
To whom my lady sends, with kindly care,
Her cheering cordials,—could'st thou have believ'd it?
Do mutter spells to fence from things unholy,
And grumble, in a hollow smother'd voice,
The name of Campbell, as unwillingly
They stretch their wither'd hands to take her bounty.
The wizards are in pay to rouse their fears
With dismal tales of future ills foreseen,
From Campbell and Maclean together join'd
In hateful union.—Ev'n the very children,
Sporting the heath among, when they discover
A loathsome toad or adder on their path,
Crush it with stones, and, grinding wickedly
Their teeth, in puny spite, call it a Campbell.
Benlora too, that savage gloomy man—

MORTON.

Ay, evil is the day that brings him back.
Unjustly by a Campbell hath he been,
The peaceful treaty of the clans unheeded,
In thraldom kept; from which, but now escaped,
He like a furious tyger is enchafed,

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And thinks Argyll was privy to the wrong
His vassal put upon him. Well I know
His bloody vengeful nature: and Maclean,
Weak and unsteady, mov'd by ev'ry counsel,
Brave in the field, but still in purpose timid,
Oft times the instrument in wicked hands
Of wrongs he would abhor,—alas, I fear,
Will ill defend the lovely spouse he swore
To love and cherish.

ROSA.

Heavy steps approach:
Hush! see who comes upon us!—sly Lochtarish,
And his dark colleagues.—Wherefore come they hither?

(Morton *retires to the bottom of the stage, and enter* Lochtarish, Benlora, *and* Glenfadden.)

LOCHTARISH.

We thought, fair maid, to find the chieftain here.

ROSA.

He is in these apartments.

LOCHTARISH.

Would it greatly
Annoy your gentleness to tell his honour,
We wait to speak with him upon affairs
Of much concernment?

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ROSA.

My service is not wanted; to your wish,
See, there he comes unwarn'd, and with him too
His noble lady.

(Retiring to the bottom of the stage.)

LOCHTARISH.

Ha! there they come! see how he hangs upon her,
With boyish fondness!

GLENFADDEN.

Ah, the goodly creature!
How fair she is! how winning!---See that form;
Those limbs beneath their foldy vestments moving,
As though in mountain clouds they robed were,
And music of the air their motion measur'd.

LOCHTARISH.

Ay, shrewd and crafty earl! 'tis not for nought
Thou hither sent'st this jewel of thy race.
A host of Campbells, each a chosen man,
Could not enthral us, as, too soon I fear,
This single Campbell will. Shrewd crafty foe!

BENLORA.

Hell lend me aid, if heaven deny its grace,
But I will thwart him, crafty though he be!

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LOCHTARISH.

But now for your petition: see we now
How he receives your suit.

Enter MACLEAN *and* HELEN.

BENLORA, (*eying her attentively as she enters.*)

A potent foe it is: ay, by my faith,
A fair and goodly creature!

MACLEAN.

Again good morrow to ye, gallant kinsmen:
Come ye to say, I can with any favour
The right good liking prove, and high regard
I bear to you, who are my chiefest strength,—
The pillars of my clan?

BENLORA.

Yes, we are come, Maclean, a boon to beg.

LOCHTARISH.

A boon that, granted, will yourself enrich.

MACLEAN.

Myself enrich?

LOCHTARISH.

Yes; thereby wilt thou be

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One gallant man the richer. Hear us out.
Allen of Dura, from his banishment——

MACLEAN.

False reaver! name him not.—Is he return'd?
Dares he again set foot upon this isle?

BENLORA.

Yes, chief; upon this isle set foot he hath:
And on nor isle nor main-land doth there step
A braver man than he.——Lady, forgive me:
The boldest Campbell never saw his back.

HELEN.

Nay, good Benlora, ask not my forgiveness:
I love to hear thee praise, with honest warmth,
The valiant of thy name, which now is mine.

BENLORA, *(aside.)*

Ha! good Benlora!—this is queenly pride.
(Aloud.) Madam, you honour us.

HELEN.

If so, small thanks be to my courtesy,
Sharing myself with pride the honest fame
Of every brave Maclean.——I'll henceforth keep
A proud account of all my gallant friends:
And every valiant Campbell therein noted,
On the opposing leaf, in letters fair,

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Shall with a brave Maclean be proudly match'd.
(Benlora *and* Glenfadden *bow in silence.*)

LOCHTARISH.

Madam, our grateful duty waits upon you.
(*Aside to* Benlora.)
What think'st thou of her, friend?

BENLORA, (*aside to* Lochtarish.)

What think I of her?
Incomparable hypocrite!

LOCHTARISH, (*aloud.*)

But to our suit: for words of courtesy
It must not be forgotten.——Chief, vouchsafe:
Benlora here, who from his loathly prison,
Which for your sake two years he hath endured,
Begs earnestly this grace for him we mention'd,
Allen of Dura. (*Aside to* Benlora.)
Kneel, man; be more pressing.

BENLORA, (*aside to* Lochtarish.)

Nay, by my fay! if crouching pleases thee,
Do it thyself. (*Going up proudly to* Maclean.)
Maclean; thy father put into these hands
The government and guidance of thy nonage.
How I the trust fulfill'd, this castle, strengthen'd
With walls and added towers, and stor'd, besides,
With arms and trophies, in rough warfare won

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From ev'n the bravest of our western clans,
Will testify. What I in recompense
Have for my service earn'd, these galled wrists
(*pushing up the sleeve from his arm.*)
Do also testify.——Such as I am,
For an old friend I plainly beg this grace:
Say if my boon be granted or denied.

MACLEAN.

The man for whom thou plead'st is most unworthy;
Yet let him safely from my shores depart:
I harm him not.

BENLORA, (*turning from him indignantly.*)

My suit is then denied.
(*To* Lochtarish *and* Glenfadden.)
Go ye to Dura's Allen; near the shore
He harbours in his aged mother's cot;
Bid him upon the ocean drift again
His shatter'd boat, and be a wanderer still.

HELEN, (*coming forward eagerly.*)

His aged mother!
(*To* Maclean.) Oh! and shall he go?
No, no, he shall not! On this day of joy,
Wilt thou to me refuse it?
(*Hanging upon him with looks of entreaty, till,*

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seeing him relent, she then turns joyfully to Benlora.)

Bid your wanderer
Safe with his aged mother still remain,—
A banish'd man no more.

MACLEAN.

This is not well; but be it as thou wilt;
Thou hast prevail'd, my Helen.

LOCHTARISH *and* GLENFADDEN, (*bowing low.*)

We thank thee, lady.

(Benlora *bows slightly, in sullen silence.*)

MACLEAN, (*to* Benlora.)

Then let thy friend remain: he has my pardon.

(Benlora *bows again in silence.*)

Clear up thy brow, Benlora; he is pardon'd.

(*Pauses, but* Benlora *is still silent.*)

We trust to meet you shortly in the hall;
And there, my friends, shall think our happy feast
More happy for your presence.—

(*Going up again, with anxious courtesy, to* Benlora.)

Thy past services,
Which great and many are, my brave Benlora,
Shall be remember'd well. Thou hast my honour,
And high regard.

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HELEN.

And mine to boot, good kinsman, if the value
You put upon them makes them worth the having.

BENLORA (*bows sullenly and retires; then muttering aside to himself as he goes out.*)

Good kinsman! good Benlora! gracious words
From this most high and potent dame, vouchsafed
To one so poor and humble as myself. (*Exit.*

LOCHTARISH, (*aside to* Glenfadden)

But thou forgettest.——

GLENFADDEN, (*aside to* Lochtarish.)

No; I'll stay behind,
And move Maclean to join our nightly meeting.
Midnight the hour when you desire his presence?

LOCHTARISH.

Yes, even so: then will we be prepared. (*Exit.*

GLENFADDEN, (*returning to* Maclean.)

Chieftain, I would some words of privacy
Speak with you, should your leisure now permit.

MACLEAN.

Come to my closet then, I'll hear thee gladly.
(*Exeunt* Maclean *and* Glenfadden.

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HELEN, (*to* Rosa, *who now comes forward.*)

Where hast thou been, my Rosa? with my boy?
Have they with wild-flowers deck'd his cradle round?
And peeps he through them like a little nestling—
A little heath-cock broken from its shell,
That through the bloom puts forth its tender beak,
As steals some rustling footstep on his nest?
Come, let me go and look upon him. Soon,
Ere two months more go by, he'll look again
In answer to my looks, as though he knew
The wistful face that looks so oft upon him,
And smiles so dearly, is his mother's.
Think'st thou
He'll soon give heed and notice to my love?

ROSA.

I doubt it not: he is a lively infant,
And moves his little limbs with vigour, spreading
His fingers forth, as if in time they would
A good claymore clench bravely.

HELEN.

A good claymore clench bravely!—O! to see him
A man!—a valiant youth!—a noble chieftain!
And laying on his plaided shoulder, thus,
A mother's hand, say proudly, "this is mine!"
I shall not then a lonely stranger be

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'Midst those who bless me not.—I shall not then---
But silent be my tongue. (*Weeps.*)

ROSA.

Dear madam, still in hope look forward cheerly.
(Morton *comes from the bottom of the stage.*)
And here is Morton, with some tidings for you:
God grant they comfort you!---I must withdraw:
His wary faithfulness mistrusts my love,
But I am not offended. (*Offering to retire.*)

HELEN.

Nay, remain. (*Beckoning her back.*)
Say what thou hast to say, my worthy Morton,
For Rosa is as faithful as thyself.

MORTON.

This morning, lady, 'mongst the farther cliffs,
Dress'd like a fisher peasant, did I see
The Lord of Lorne, your brother.

HELEN.

Ha! say'st thou,
The Lord of Lorne, my brother?--Thou'rt deceiv'd.

MORTON.

No, no; in vain his sordid garb conceal'd him:
His noble form and stately step I knew
Before he spoke.

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HELEN.

He spoke to thee?

MORTON.

He did.

HELEN.

Was he alone?

MORTON.

He was; but, near at hand,
Another stranger, noble as himself,
And in like garb disguised, amongst the rocks
I mark'd, though he advanced not.

HELEN.

Alas, alas, my brother! why is this?
He spoke to thee, thou says't—I mean my brother:
What did he say?

MORTON.

He earnestly entreats
To see you privately; and bids you say
When this may be. Meantime, he lies conceal'd
Where I may call him forth at your command.

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HELEN.

O, why disguised?—Think'st thou he is not safe?

MORTON.

Safe in his hiding-place he is: but yet
The sooner he shall leave this coast, the better.

HELEN.

To see him thus!—O, how I am beset!
Tell him at twilight, in my nurse's chamber,
I will receive him. But be sure thou add,
Himself alone will I receive—alone—
With no companion must he come. Forget not
To say, that I entreat it earnestly.

MORTON.

I will remember this.

HELEN.

Go to him quickly then; and, till the hour,
Still do thou hover near him. Watch his haunt,
Lest some rude fisherman or surly hind
Surprise him.—Go thou quickly. O, be prudent!
And be not for a moment off the watch.

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MORTON.

Madam, I will obey you: trust me well.
(*Exit.*

HELEN, (*much disturbed.*)

My brother on the coast; and with him too,
As well I guess, the man I must not see!

ROSA.

Mean you the brave Sir Hubert?

HELEN.

Yes, my Rosa.
My noble brother in his powerful self
So strong in virtue stands, he thinks full surely
The daughter of his sire no weakness hath;
And wists not how a simple heart must struggle
To be what it would be---what it must be---
Ay, and, so aid me, Heaven! what it shall be.

ROSA.

And Heaven will aid you, madam, doubt it not.
Though on this subject still you have repress'd
All communing, yet, ne'ertheless, I well
Have mark'd your noble striving, and rever'd
Your silent inward warfare, bravely held;
In this more pressing combat firm and valiant,
As is your noble brother in the field.

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HELEN.

I thank thee, gentle Rosa; thou art kind---
I should be franker with thee; but I know not---
Something restrains me here.
(*Laying her hand on her heart.*)
I love and trust thee;
And on thy breast I'll weep when I am sad;
But ask not why I weep. (*Exeunt.*)

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ACT II.

SCENE I. *An Apartment in twilight, almost dark; the door of an inner Chamber, standing a little ajar, at the bottom of the Stage.*

Enter JOHN OF LORNE *and* SIR HUBERT DE GREY, *disguised as peasants.*

DE GREY.

Nay, stop, I pray; advance we not too far?

LORNE.

Morton hath bid us in this place to wait.
The nurse's chamber is adjoining to it;
And, till her light within give notice, here
Thou may'st remain: when I am call'd thou'lt leave me.

DE GREY.

Till thou art call'd! and may I stay to hear
The sweetness of her voice---her footstep's sound:—
Perhaps snatch in the torch's hasty light
One momentary vision of that form---.

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The form that hath to me of earthly make
No fellow? May it be without transgression?

LORNE.

Why should'st thou not? De Grey, thou art
too fearful;
Here art thou come with no dishonest will;
And well she knows thine honour. Her commands,
Though we must yield to them, capricious seem;
Seeing thou art with me, too nicely scrupulous;
And therefore need no farther be obey'd
Than needs must be. She puts thee not on honour.
Were I so used———

DE GREY.

'Spite of thy pride, would'st thou
Revere her still the more.---O, no, brave Lorne!
I blame her not. When she, a willing victim,
To spare the blood of two contending clans,
Against my faithful love her suffrage gave,
I bless'd her: and the deep but chasten'd sorrow
With which she bade me---Oh! that word! farewell,
Is treasur'd in my bosom as its share
Of all that earthly love hath power to give.
It came from Helen, and, from her received,
Shall not be worn with thankless dull repining.

LORNE.

A noble heart thou hast: such manly meekness

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Becomes thy gen'rous nature. But for me,
More fierce and wilful, sorely was I chafed
To see thy faithful heart robb'd of its hope,
All for the propping up a hollow peace
Between two warlike clans, who will, as long
As bagpipes sound, and blades flash to the sun,
Delighting in the noble sport of war,
Some fierce opponents find. What doth it boot,
If men in fields must fight, and blood be shed,
What clans are in the ceaseless strife opposed?

DE GREY.

Ah, John of Lorne! too keenly is thy soul
To war inclin'd—to wasteful, ruthless war.

LORNE.

The warlike minstrel's rousing lay thou lov'st:
Shall bards i' the hall sing of our fathers' deeds
To lull their sons to sleep? Vain simple wish!
I love to hear the sound of holy bell,
And peaceful men their praises lift to heaven:
I love to see around their blazing fire
The peasant and his cheerful family set,
Eating their fearless meal. But when the roar
Of battle rises, and the closing clans,
Dark'ning the sun-gleam'd heath, in dread affray
Are mingled; blade with blade, and limb with limb,
Nerve-strain'd, in terrible strength; yea, soul with
soul

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Nobly contending; who would raise aloft
The interdicting hand, and say, "Be still'd?"
If this in me be sin, may Heaven forgive me!
That being am not I.

DE GREY.

In very deed
This is thy sin; and of thy manly nature
The only blemish worthy of that name.
More peaceful be, and thou wilt be more noble.

LORNE.

Well, here we will not wrangle for the point.
None in th' embattled field who have beheld
Hubert de Grey in mailed hauberk fight,
Will guess how much that knight in peace delights.
Still burns my heart that such a man as thou
Was't for this weak, unsteady, poor Maclean——

DE GREY.

Nay, with contempt, I pray thee, name him not.
Her husband, and despised! O, no, no, no!
All that pertains to her, ev'n from that hour,
Honoured and sacred is.

LORNE.

Thou gen'rous heart! more noble than myself!
I will not grieve thee.—I'll to Helen go,

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With every look and word that might betray
Indignant thoughts, or wound her gentle spirit,
Strictly suppress'd: and to her ear will give
Thy gen'rous greetings, and thy manly words
Of cheering comfort;—all most faithfully
Shall be remembered.

DE GREY.

Ay, and my request.

LORNE.

To see the child?

DE GREY.

Ev'n so: to look upon it;—
Upon the thing that is of her; this bud—
This seedling of a flower so exquisite.
(*Light is seen in the inner chamber.*)
Ha! light is in the chamber! moves the door?
Some one approaches. O! but for a moment
Let me behind thy friendly tartans be,
And snatch one glance of what that light will give.
(*Conceals himself behind* Lorne, *who steps some paces back, setting his hand to his side, and tilting his plaid over his arms to favour him; while the door of the inner chamber opens, and* Helen *appears, bearing a lamp, which she af-*

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terwards sets upon a stone slab as she advances.)

Her form---her motion—yea, that mantled arm,
Press'd closely to her breast, as she was wont
When chilly winds assail'd.—The face---O, woe is me!
It was not then so pale.

LORNE, (*to him, in a low voice.*)

Be gone: be gone.

DE GREY.

Blest vision, I have seen thee! Fare thee well!
(*Exit in haste.*)

HELEN, (*coming forward, alarmed.*)

What sound is that of steps that hasten from us?
Is Morton on the watch?

LORNE.

Fear nothing; faithful Morton is at hand:
The steps thou heard'st were friendly.

HELEN, (*embracing* Lorne.)

My brother! meet we thus,---disguis'd, by stealth?
Is this like peace? How is my noble father?
Hath any ill befallen?

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LORNE.

Argyll is well;
And nothing ill, my sister, hath befallen,
If thou art well and happy.

HELEN.

Speak'st thou truly?
Why art thou come? Why thus upon our coast?
O take it not unkindly that I say,
"Why art thou come?"

LORNE.

Near to the opposite shore,
With no design, but on a lengthen'd chace,
A lusty deer pursuing from the hills
Of Morvern, where Sir Hubert and myself
Guests of the social lord two days had been,
We found us; when a sudden strong desire
To look upon the Castle of Maclean,
Seen from the coast, our eager fancy seiz'd,
And that indulged, forthwith we did agree
The frith to cross, and to its chief and dame
A hasty visit make. But as our boat
Lay waiting to receive us, warn'd by one
Whom well I knew, (the vassal of a friend,
Whose word I could not doubt,) that jealous rancour,

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Stirr'd up amongst the vassals of Maclean,
Who in their savage fury had been heard
To utter threats against thy innocent self,
Made it unsafe in open guise to venture,
Here in this garb we are to learn in secret
The state in which thou art.---How is it then?
Morton's report has added to my fears:
All is not well with thee.

HELEN.

No, all is well.

LORNE.

A cold constrained voice that answer gave:
All is not well.---Maclean---dares he neglect thee?

HELEN.

Nay, wrong him not; kind and affectionate
He still remains.

LORNE.

But it is said, his vassals with vile names
Have dared to name thee, even in open clan,
And have remain'd unpunished. Is it so?
(*Pauses for an answer, but she is silent.*)
All is not well.

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HELEN.

Have I not said it is?

LORNE.

Ah! dost thou thus return a brother's love
With cold reserve?---O speak to me, my Helen!
Speak as a sister should.---Have they insulted thee?
Has any wrong---my heart within me burns
If I but think upon it.---Answer truly.

HELEN.

What, am I questioned then? Think'st thou to find me
Like the spoil'd heiress of some Lowland lord,
Peevish and dainty; who, with scorn regarding
The ruder home she is by marriage placed in,
Still holds herself an alien from its interest,
With poor repining, losing every sense
Of what she is, in what she has been? No.---
I love thee, Lorne; I love my father's house:
The meanest cur that round his threshold barks,
Is in my memory as some kindred thing:
Yet take it not unkindly when I say,
The lady of Maclean no grievance hath.
To tell the Lord of Lorne.

LORNE.

And has the vow,

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Constrain'd, unblest, and joyless as it was,
Which gave thee to a lord unworthy of thee,
Placed thee beyond the reach of kindred ties—
The warmth of blood to blood—the sure affection
That nature gives to all—a brother's love?
No, by all sacred things! here is thy hold:
Here is thy true, unshaken, native stay:
One that shall fail thee never, though, the while,
A faithless, wavering, intervening band
Seems to divide thee from it.

(*Grasping her hand vehemently, as if he would lead her away.*)

HELEN.

What dost thou mean? What violent grasp is this?
Com'st thou to lead me from my husband's house,
Beneath the shade of night, with culprit's stealth?

LORNE.

No, daughter of Argyll; when John of Lorne
Shall come to lead thee from these hated walls
Back to thy native home,—with culprit's stealth,
Beneath the shades of night, it shall not be.
With half our western warriors at his back
He'll proudly come. Thy listening timid chief
Shall hear our martial steps upon his heath,
With heavy measured fall, send, beat by beat,

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From the far smitten earth a sullen sound,
Like deep-dell'd forests groaning to the strokes
Of lusty wood-men. On the watch-tower's height,
His straining eye shall mark our sheathless swords
From rank to rank their lengthen'd blaze emit,
Like streams of shiv'ring light, in hasty change,
Upon the northern firmament.—By stealth!
No! not by stealth!—believe me, not by stealth
Shall thou these portals pass.

HELEN.

Them have I enter'd
The pledge of peace: and here my place I'll hold
As dame and mistress of the warlike clan
Who yield obedience to their chief, my lord;
And whatsoe'er their will to me may bear,
Of good or ill, so will I hold me ever.
Yea, did the Lord of Lorne, dear as he is,
With all the warlike Campbells at his back
Here hostile entrance threaten; on these walls,
Failing the strength that might defend them better,
I would myself, while by my side in arms
One valiant clan's-man stood, against his powers,
To the last push, with desp'rate opposition,
This castle hold.

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LORNE.

And would'st thou so? so firm and valiant art thou?
Forgive me, noble creature!—Oh! the fate—
The wayward fate that binds thy gen'rous soul
To poor unsteady weakness!

HELEN.

Speak'st thou thus?
Thus pressing still upon the galled spot?
Thou deal'st unkindly with me. Yes, my brother,
Unkindly and unwisely. Wherefore hast thou
Brought to this coast the man thou knowest well
I ought not in mysterious guise to see?
And he himself—seeks he again to move
The hapless weakness I have strove to conquer?
I thought him generous.

LORNE.

So think him still.
His wishes tend not to disturb thy peace:
Far other are his thoughts.---He bids me tell thee,
To cheer thy gentle heart, nor think of him,
As one who will in vain and stubborn grief
His ruin'd bliss lament,---he bids me say
That he will even strive, if it be possible,
Amongst the maidens of his land to seek

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Some faint resemblance of the good he lost,
That thou may'st hear of him with less regret,
As one by holy bands link'd to his kind.
He bids me say, should ever child of his
And child of thine—but here his quivering lip
And starting tears spoke what he could not speak.

HELEN.

O, noble gen'rous heart! and does he offer
Such cheering manly comfort? Heaven protect,
And guide, and bless him! On his noble head
Such prosp'rous bliss be pour'd, that hearing of it,
Shall through the gloom of my untoward state
Like gleams of sun-shine break, that from afar
Look o'er the dull dun heath.

LORNE.

But one request——

HELEN.

Ha! makes he one?

LORNE.

It is to see thy child.

HELEN.

To see my child! Will he indeed regard it?
Shall it be bless'd by him?

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Enter MORTON *in haste.*

MORTON.

Conceal yourself, my lord, or by this passage
(*pointing off the stage.*)
The nearest postern gain: I hear the sound
Of heavy steps at hand, and voices stern.

HELEN.

O fly, my brother! Morton will conduct thee.
(*To* Morton.) Where is Sir Hubert?

MORTON.

Safe he is without.

HELEN.

Heaven keep him so!
(*To* Lorne.) O leave me! I, the while,
Will in, and, with mine infant in mine arms,
Meet thee again, ere thou depart'st.—Fly! fly!
(*Exeunt,* Helen *into the inner Chamber, putting out the lamp as she goes, and* Lorne *and* Morton *by a side Passage.*)

SCENE II. *A Cave, lighted by flaming brands stuck aloft on its rugged sides, and shedding a fierce glaring light down upon the objects below.* Lochta-

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rish, Benlora, Glenfadden, *with several of the Chief Vassals of* Maclean, *are discovered in a recess, formed by projecting rocks, at the bottom of the Stage, engaged in earnest discourse, from which they move forward slowly, speaking as they advance.*

LOCHTARISH.

And thus, ye see, by strong necessity,
We are compell'd to this.

FIRST VASSAL.

Perhaps thou'rt right.

LOCHTARISH.

Say'st thou *perhaps?* Dost thou not plainly see
That ne'er a man amongst us can securely
His lands possess, or say, "my house is mine,"
While, under tutorage of proud Argyll,
This beauteous sorceress our besotted chief
By soft enchantment holds?
(*Laying his hand on the* First Vassal.)
My brave Glenore,
What are thy good deserts, that may uphold thee
In favour with a Campbell?—Duncan's blood,
Slain in his boat, with all its dashing oars
Skirting our shore, while that his vaunting piper

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The Campbell's triumph play'd? Will this speak
for thee?
(*Turning to* Second Vassal.)
And Thona, what good merit pleadest thou?
The coal-black steed of Clone, thy moon-light
plunder,
Ta'en from the spiteful laird, will he, good sooth!
Neigh favour on thee?
(*To* Third Vassal.)
And my valiant Fallen,
Bethink thee well if fair-hair'd Flora's cries,
Whom from her native bower by force thou took'st,
Will plead for thee.---And say ye still *perhaps*---
Perhaps there is necessity?

FIRST VASSAL.

Strong should it be, Lochtarish; for the act
Is fell and cruel thou would'st push us to.

GLENFADDEN, (*to* First Vassal.)

Ha, man of mercy! are thy lily hands
From bloody taint unstain'd? What sights were
those
Thou look'dst upon in Brunock's burning tower,
When infants through the flames their wailings
sent,
And yet unaided perish'd?

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LOCHTARISH, (*soothingly.*)

Tush, Glenfadden!
Too hasty art thou.
(*To the* Vassals.) Ye will say, belike,
" Our safety---our existence did demand
Utter extinction of that hold of foes."
And well ye may.---A like necessity
Compels us now, and yet ye hesitate.

GLENFADDEN.

Our sighted seers the fun'ral lights have seen,
Not moving onward in the wonted path
On which by friends the peaceful dead are borne,
But hov'ring o'er the heath like countless stars,
Spent and extinguish'd on the very spot
Where first they twinkled. This too well foreshews
Interment of the slain, whose bloody graves
Of the same mould are made on which they fell.

SECOND VASSAL.

Ha! so indeed! some awful tempest gathers.

FIRST VASSAL.

What sighted man hath seen it?

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GLENFADDEN.

He whose eye
Can see on northern waves the found'ring bark,
With all her shrieking crew, sink to the deep,
While yet, with gentle winds, on dimpling surge
She sails from port in all her gallant trim:
John of the Isle hath seen it.

Omnes, starting back.

Then hangs some evil over us.

GLENFADDEN.

Know ye not
The mermaid hath been heard upon our rocks?

Omnes, still more alarmed.

Ha! when?

GLENFADDEN.

Last night, upon the rugged crag
That lifts its dark head through the cloudy smoke
Of dashing billows, near the western cliff.
Sweetly, but sadly, o'er the stilly deep
The passing sound was borne. I need not say
How fatal to our clan that boding sound
Hath ever been.

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THIRD VASSAL.

In faith thou makest me quake.

SECOND VASSAL.

Some fearful thing hangs o'er us.——

FIRST VASSAL.

If 'tis fated
Our clan before our ancient foe shall fall,
Can we heaven's will prevent? Why should we then
The Campbells' wrath provoke?

BENLORA, *(stepping up fiercely to* First Vassal.*)*

Heaven's will prevent!—The Campbells' ire provoke!
Is such base tameness utter'd by the son
Of one, who would into the fiery pit
Of damned fiends have leapt, so that his grasp
Might pull a Campbell with him?
Bastard blood!
Thy father spoke not thus.

LOCHTARISH, *(soothingly.)*

Nay, brave Benlora:
He means not as thou think'st.

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BENLORA.

If heaven decrees
Slaughter and ruin for us, come it then!
But let our enemies, close grappled to us,
In deadly strife, their ruin join with ours.
Let corse to corse, upon the bloody heath,
Maclean and Campbell, stiff'ning side by side,
With all the gnashing extacy of hate
Upon their ghastly visages impress'd,
Lie horribly!—For ev'ry widow's tear
Shed in our clan, let matron Campbells howl.

LOCHTARISH.

Indeed, my friends, although too much in ire,
Benlora wisely speaks.—Shall we in truth
Wait for our ruin from a crafty foe,
Who here maintains this keenly watchful spy
In gentle kindness masked?

GLENFADDEN.

Nor need we fear,
As good Lochtarish hath already urged,
Her death will rouse Argyll. It will be deem'd,
As we shall grace it with all good respect
Of funeral pomp, a natural visitation.

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LOCHTARISH.

Ay, and besides, we'll swear upon the book,
And truly swear, if we are call'd upon,
We have not shed her blood.

RENLORA.

I like not this.
If ye her life will take, in open day
Let her a public sacrifice be made.
Let the loud trumpet far and near proclaim
Our bloody feast, and at the rousing sound,
Let every clans-man of the hated name
His vengeful weapon clench.——
I like it not, Lochtarish. What we do,
Let it be boldly done.—Why should we slay her?
Let her in shame be from the castle sent;
Which to her haughty sire will do, I ween,
Far more despite than taking of her life.—
A feeble woman's life!—I like it not.

(Turning on his heel angrily, and striding to the bottom of the Stage.)

LOCHTARISH, *(aside to* Glenfadden *)*

Go to him, friend, and sooth him to our purpose.
The fiery fool! how madly wild he is!

(Glenfadden *goes to the bottom of the stage, and*

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is seen remonstrating in dumb-shew with Benlora, *while* Lochtarish *speaks to the Vassals on the front.*)

LOCHTARISH.

My friends, why on each other look ye thus
In gloomy silence? freely speak your thoughts.
Mine have I freely spoken: that advising
Which for the good—nay, I must say existence,
Of this our ancient clan most needful is.
When did Lochtarish ever for himself
A separate 'vantage seek, in which the clan
At large partook not? Am I doubted now?

SECOND VASSAL.

No, nothing do we doubt thy public zeal.

LOCHTARISH.

Then is my long experience o' the sudden
To childish folly turn'd?
Think'st thou, good Thona,
We should beneath this artful mistress live,
Hush'd in deceitful peace, till John of Lorne,
For whom the office of a treacherous spy
She doth right slily manage, with his powers
Shall come upon us? Once ye would have spurn'd
At thoughts so base; but now, when forth I stand
To do what vengeance, safety, nay, existence

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All loudly call for; even as though already
The enemy's baleful influence hung o'er ye,
Like quell'd and passive men ye silent stand.

FIRST VASSAL, (*roused.*)

Nay, cease, Lochtarish! quell'd and passive men
Thou know'st we are not.

LOCHTARISH.

Yet a woman's life,
And that a treacherous woman, moves ye thus.
Bold as your threats of dark revenge have been,
A strong decisive deed appals ye now.
Our chieftain's feeble undetermined spirit
Infects you all: ye dare not stand by me.

Omnes.

We dare not, say'st thou?

LOCHTARISH.

Dare not, will I say!
Well spoke the jeering Camerons, I trow,
As past their fishing boats our vessel steer'd,
When with push'd lip, and finger pointing thus,
They call'd our crew the Campbell-cow'd Macleans.

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Omnes, (roused fiercely.)
The Campbell-cow'd Macleans!

SECOND VASSAL.
Infernal devils!
Dare they to call us so?

LOCHTARISH.
Ay, by my truth!
Nor think that from the Camerons alone
Ye will such greeting have, if back ye shrink,
And stand not by me now.

Omnes, (eagerly.)
We'll stand!—We'll stand!

SECOND VASSAL.
Tempt us no more:—There's ne'er a man of us
That will not back thee boldly.

LOCHTARISH.
Ay, indeed?
Now are ye men!—Give me your hands to this.
(They all give him their hands.)
Now am I satisfied. *(Looking off the Stage.)*
The chief approaches.

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Ye know full well the spirit of the man
That we must deal withall; therefore be bold.

Omnes.

Mistrust us not.

(*Enter* Maclean, *who advances to the middle of the Stage, while* Lochtarish, Benlora, Glenfadden, *and all the other Vassals gather round him with stern determined looks. A pause;* Maclean *eying them all round with inquisitive anxiety.*)

MACLEAN.

A goodly meeting at this hour convened.
(*A sullen pause.*)
Benlora; Thona; Allen of Glenore;
And all of you, our first and bravest kinsmen;
What mystery in this sullen silence is?
Hangs any threaten'd evil o'er the clan?

BENLORA.

Yes, chieftain; evil that doth make the blood
Within your grey-hair'd warriors' veins to burn,
And their brogued feet to spurn the ground that bears them.

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LOCHTARISH.

Evil that soon will wrap your tower in flames,
Your ditches fill with blood, and carrion birds
Glut with the butcher'd corses of your slain.

GLENFADDEN.

Ay; evil that doth make the hoary locks
Of sighted men around their age-worn scalps
Like quickened points of crackling flame to rise;
Their teeth to grind, and strained eye-balls roll
In fitful frenzy, at the horrid things,
In terrible array, before them raised.

FIRST VASSAL.

The mermaid hath been heard upon our rocks:
The fatal song of waves.

GLENFADDEN.

The northern deep
Is heard with distant moanings from our coast,
Uttering the dismal bodeful sounds of death.

SECOND VASSAL.

The funeral lights have shone upon our heath,
Marking in countless groupes the graves of thousands.

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BENLORA.

Yea, chief; and sounds like to thy father's voice
Have from the sacred mould wherein he lies,
At dead of night, by wakeful men been heard
Three times distinctly. (*Turning to* Glenfadden.)
Said'st thou not thrice?

GLENFADDEN.

Yes; three times heard distinctly.

MACLEAN.

Ye much amaze me, friends.—Such things have been.

LOCHTARISH.

Yea, chief; and think'st thou we may lightly deem
Of coming ills, by signs like these forewarn'd?

MACLEAN.

Then an it be, high heaven have mercy on us!

LOCHTARISH, (*in a loud solemn voice.*)

Thyself have mercy on us!

MACLEAN.

How is this?

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Your words confuse and stun me.—Have I power
To ward this evil off?

Omnes.
Thou hast! thou hast!

MACLEAN.
Then God to me shew mercy in my need,
As I will do for you and for my clan
Whate'er my slender power enables me.

Omnes.
Amen! and swear to it.

MACLEAN, (*starting back.*)
What words are these,
With such wild fierceness uttered? name the thing
That ye would have me do.

BENLORA, (*stepping out from the rest.*)
Ay, we will name it.
Helen the Campbell, foster'd in your bosom,
A serpent is, who wears a hidden sting
For thee and all thy name; the oath-bound spy
Of dark Argyll, our foe; the baleful plague
To which ill-omen'd sounds and warnings point,
As that on which existence or extinction—
The name and being of our clan depend;—

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A witch of deep seduction.—Cast her forth.
The strange, unnatural union of two bloods
Adverse and hostile, most abhorred is.
The heart of every warrior of your name
Rises against it. Yea, the grave calls out,
And says it may not be.—Nay, shrink not, chief,
When I again repeat it,—Cast her off.

MACLEAN.

Art thou a man? and bid'st me cast her off,
Bound as I am by sacred holy ties?

LOCHTARISH.

Bound as thou art by that which thou regardest
As sacred holy ties; what tie so sacred
As those that to his name and kindred vassals
The noble chieftain bind? If ties there be
To these opposed, although a saint from heaven
Had bless'd them o'er the cross'd and holy things,
They are annull'd and broken.

BENLORA.

Ay, Lochtarish;
Sound doctrine hast thou uttered. Such the creed
Of ancient warriors was, and such the creed
That we their sons will with our swords maintain.
(Drawing his sword fiercely, whilst the rest follow his example.)

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MACLEAN.

Ye much confound me with your violent words.
I can in battle strive, as well ye know:
But how to strive with you, ye violent men,
My spirit knows not.

LOCHTARISH.

Decide—decide, Maclean: the choice is thine
To be our chieftain, leading forth thy bands,
As heretofore thy valiant father did,
Against our ancient foe, or be the husband,
Despis'd, forsaken, curs'd, of her thou prizest
More than thy clan and kindred.

GLENFADDEN.

Make thy choice.
Benlora wont, in better times, to lead us
Against the Campbells, with a chieftain's power,
Shall, with the first blast of his warlike horn,
If so he wills it, round his standard gather
Thy rous'd and valiant vassals to a man.

MACLEAN, (*greatly startled.*)

Ha! go your thoughts to this? Desert me so?
My vassals so desert me?

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LOCHTARISH.

Ay, by my faith our very women too:
And in your hall remain, to serve your state,
Nor child nor aged crone.

MACLEAN, (*after great agitation.*)

Decide, and cast her off!—How far the thoughts
To which these words ye yoke, may go, I guess not.
(*Eagerly.*) They reach not to her life?
(*Pauses and looks at them anxiously, but they are silent.*)
Oh, oh! oh, oh! that stern and dreadful silence!

LOCHTARISH.

We will not shed her blood.

MACLEAN.

Then ye will spare her.

LOCHTARISH.

Commit her to our keeping: ask us not
How we shall deal with her.

MACLEAN.

Some fearful mystery is in your words,
Which covers cruel things. O woe the day,

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That I on this astounding ridge am pois'd!
On ev'ry side a fearful ruin yawns.
(*A Voice heard without, uttering wild incoherent words, mixed withshrieks of horror.*)
What frenzied voice is that?

Enter FOURTH VASSAL, *as if terribly frightened.*

LOCHTARISH, (*to* Fourth Vassal.)
What brings thee hither?

FOURTH VASSAL.
He fixes wildly on the gloomy void
His starting eye-balls, bent on fearful sights,
That make the sinews of his aged limbs
In agony to quiver.

LOCHTARISH.
Who did'st thou say?

FOURTH VASSAL.
John of the Isle, the sighted awful man.
Go, see yourselves: i' the outer cave he is.
Entranced he stands; arrested on his way
By horrid visions, as he hurried hither
Enquiring for the chief.
(*Voice heard without, as before.*)

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LOCHTARISH.

Hark! hark, again! dread powers are dealing with him.
Come, chieftain—come and see the awful man.
If heaven or hell have power to move thy will,
Thou canst not now withstand us.
(*Pausing for him to go.*) Hear'st thou not?
And motionless?

MACLEAN.

I am beset and stunn'd,
And every sense bewilder'd. Violent men!
If ye unto this fearful pitch are bent,—
When such necessity is press'd upon me,
What doth avail resistance? Woe the day!
Ev'n lead me where ye will.

(*Exit* Maclean, *exhausted and trembling, leaning on* Lochtarish, *and followed by* Benlora *and* Glenfadden *and* Vassals; *two inferior* Vassals *alone left upon the Stage.*)

FIRST, (*looking after* Maclean.)

Ay, there he goes; so spent, and scar'd, and feeble!
Without a prophet's skill, we may foretell,
John of the Isle, by sly Lochtarish taught,

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Will work him soon to be an oath-bound wretch
To this their fell design.—Are all things ready?

SECOND.

All is in readiness.

FIRST.

When ebbs the tide?

SECOND.

At early dawn, when in the narrow creek
Near to the castle, with our trusty mates,
Our boat must be in waiting to receive her.

FIRST.

The time so soon! alas, so young and fair!
That slow and dismal death! To be at once
Plunged in the closing deep many have suffered,
But to sit waiting on a lonely rock
For the approaching tide to throttle her—
But that she is a Campbell, I could weep.

SECOND.

Weep, fool! think soon how we'll to war again
With our old enemy, and in the field
Our good claymores reek with their hated blood:
Think upon this, and change thy tears to joy.

(Exeunt.)

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[illegible] Maclean.

[illegible] HELEN.

HELEN.

[illegible] the night
[illegible] ere long,
[illegible] Go to thy bed:
[illegible]

MACLEAN.

[illegible]

HELEN.

[illegible] I'll sit and watch by thee.

MACLEAN.

I'll sit and watch. O woe betide the hour!
And who will watch for thee?

HELEN.

And why for me?
Can any harm approach? When thou art near,
Or sleeping or awake, I am secure.

MACLEAN, (*pacing to and fro distractedly.*)

O God! O God!

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HELEN.

Those exclamations!

(*Going up to him while he avoids her.*)

Turn'st thou from me thus?
Have I offended? dost thou doubt my faith?
Hath any jealous thought——I freely own
Love did not make me thine: but, being thine,
To no love-wedded dame, bound in the ties
Of dearest sympathy, will I in duty—
In steady, willing, cheerful duty yield.
Yea, and though here no thrilling rapture be,
I look to spend with thee, by habit foster'd,
The ev'ning of my days in true affection.

MACLEAN.

The ev'ning of thy days! alas, alas!
Would heaven had so decreed it!

(*Pulling away his hand from her's.*)

Grasp me not!
It is a fiend thou cling'st to.

(*A knock at the door.*)

Power of heaven!
Are they already at the chamber door!

HELEN.

Are those who knock without unwelcome?—
hush!

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Withdraw thyself, and I will open to them.

(*Goes to the door.*)

MACLEAN.

O go not! go not!

(*Runs after her to draw her back, when a* Vassal, *rushing from behind the bed, lays hold of him.*)

VASSAL.

Art thou not sworn to us? Where is thy faith?

MACLEAN.

I know, I know! the bands of hell have bound me.

O fiends! ye've made of me—what words can speak

The hateful wretch I am!

Hark! hark! she cries!

She shrieks and calls on me!

(Helen's *cries heard without, first near and distinct, afterwards more and more distant as they bear her away; while the* Vassal *leads* Maclean *forcibly off the Stage by the opposite side, he breaks from him, and hastens towards that by which* Helen *went out.*

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VASSAL.

Thou art too strong for me. Do as thou wilt;
But if thou bring'st her back, ev'n from that moment
Benlora is our leader, and thyself,
The Campbell's husband, chieftain and Maclean
No more shalt be. We've sworn as well as thou.

(Maclean *stops irresolutely, and then suffers the* Vassal *to lead him off by the opposite side.*)

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ACT III.

SCENE I. *A small island, composed of a rugged craggy rock, on the front of the stage, and the sea in the back-ground.*

Enter two VASSALS *dragging in* HELEN, *as if just come out of their boat.*

HELEN.

O why is this? Speak, gloomy, ruthless men!
Our voyage ends not here?

FIRST VASSAL.

It does: and now,
Helen, the Campbell, fare thee—fare thee well!

SECOND VASSAL.

Helen, the Campbell, thy last greeting take
From mortal thing.

HELEN.

What! leave me on this rock,
This sea-girt rock, to solitude and famine?

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FIRST VASSAL.

Next rising tide will bring a sure relief
To all the ills we leave thee.

HELEN, (*starting.*)

I understand ye.
(*Raising her clasped hands to heaven.*)
Lord of heaven and earth;
Of storms and tempests, and th' unfathom'd deep;
Is this thy righteous will?
(*Grasping the hands of the men imploringly.*)
Ye cannot mean it.
Ye cannot leave a human creature thus
To perish by a slow approaching end,
So awful and so terrible. Instant death
Were merciful to this.

FIRST VASSAL.

If thou prefer'st it, we can shorten well
Thy term of pain and terror: from this cragg,
Full fourteen fathom deep, thou may'st be plung'd.
In shorter time than three strokes of an oar
Thy pains will cease.

SECOND VASSAL.

Come, that were better for thee.
(*Both of them take her hands, and are going to*

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hurry her to the brink of the rock, when she shrinks back.)

HELEN.

O no! the soul recoils from swift destruction!
Pause ye a while. (*Considering for a moment.*)
The downward terrible plunge!
The coil of whelming waves?—O fearful nature!
(*Catching hold of a part of the rock near her.*)
To the rough rock I'll cling: it still is something
Of firm and desp'rate hold.—Depart and leave me.
(*Waving her hand for the* Vassals *to go, whilst she keeps close hold of the rock with the other.*)

FIRST VASSAL.

Thou still may'st live within a prison pent,
If life is dear to thee.

HELEN, (*eagerly.*)

If life is dear!——Alas, it is not dear!
Although the passing fearful act of death
So very fearful is.——Say how, even in a prison,
I still may wait my quiet and natural end.

FIRST VASSAL.

Whate'er thou art, such has thy conduct been,
Thy wedded faith, ev'n with thy fellest foes,
Sure and undoubted stands:—Sign thou this scroll,

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Owning the child, thy son, of bastard birth;
And this made sure, Lochtarish bade me say
Thy life shall yet be spared.

HELEN, *(pushing him away with indignation as he offers her the scroll.)*
Off, off! vile agent of a wretch so devilish!
Now do I see from whence my ruin comes:
I and my infant foil his wicked hopes.
O harmless babe! will heaven abandon thee!
It will not!—No; it will not!
(Assuming firmness and dignity.)
Depart and leave me. In my rising breast
I feel returning strength. Heaven aids my weakness:
I'll meet its awful will.
(Waving them off with her hand.)

FIRST VASSAL.
Well, in its keeping rest thee: fare thee well,
Helen the Campbell.

SECOND VASSAL.
Be thy suff'rings short!
(Aside to the other.)
Come, quickly let us go, nor look behind,
Fell is the service we are put upon:

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Would we had never ta'en that cruel oath!

(*Exeunt* Vassals.)

HELEN, (*alone, after standing some time gazing round her, paces backwards and forwards with agitated steps, then, stopping suddenly, bends her ear to the ground as if she listened earnestly to something.*)

It is the sound; the heaving hollow swell
That notes the turning tide.—Tremendous agent!
Mine executioner, that, step by step,
Advances to the awful work of death.—
Onward it wears: a little space remov'd
The dreadful conflict is.

(*Raising her eyes to heaven, and moving her lips, as in the act of devotion, before she again speaks aloud.*)

Thou art i' the blue coped sky—th' expanse immeasurable;
I' the dark roll'd clouds, the thunder's awful home:
Thou art i' the wide-shored earth,—the pathless desert;
And in the dread immensity of waters,—
I' the fathomless deep thou art.———
Awful but excellent! beneath thy hand,
With trembling confidence, I bow me low,
And wait thy will in peace.

(*Sits down on a cragg of the rock, with her arms crossed over her breast in silent resignation; then,*

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after a pause of some length, raises her head hastily.)

Is it a sound of voices in the wind?
The breeze is on the rock: a gleam of sunshine
Breaks through those farther clouds. It is like hope
Upon a hopeless state.

(*Starting up, and gazing eagerly around her.*)

I'll to that highest cragg and take my stand:
Some little speck upon the distant wave
May to my eager gaze a vessel grow—
Some onward wearing thing,---some boat---some raft—
Some drifted plank.——O hope! thou quit'st us never!

(*Exit, disappearing amongst the rugged divisions of the rock.*)

SCENE II. *A small Island from which the former is seen in the distance, like a little pointed rock standing out of the sea.*

Enter SIR HUBERT DE GREY, *followed by two* Fishermen.

DE GREY.

This little swarded spot that o'er the waves,
Cloath'd in its green light, seem'd to beckon to us,
Right pleasant is: until our comrades join,

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Here will we rest. I marvel much they stand
So far behind. In truth, such lusty rowers
Put shame upon their skill.

FIRST FISHERMAN.

A cross-set current bore them from the track,
But see, they now bear on us rapidly.

Voices, without.

Hola!

SECOND FISHERMAN.

They call to us.—Hola! hola!
How fast they wear! they are at hand already.

DE GREY.

Right glad I am: The Lord of Lorne, I fear,
Will wait impatiently: he has already
With rapid oars the nearer main-land gain'd,
Where he appointed us to join him.—Ho!
(*Calling off the Stage.*)
Make to that point, my lads.
(*To those near him.*)
Here, for a little while, upon the turf
We'll snatch a hasty meal, and, so refreshed,
Take to our boats again.

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Enter three other Fishermen, *as from their boat on the other side of the Stage.*

Well met, my friends! I'm glad you're here at last.
How was it that you took that distant track?

THIRD FISHERMAN.

The current bore us wide of what we wist;
And, were it not your honour is impatient
Main-land to make, we had not come so soon.

DE GREY.

What had detained you?

THIRD FISHERMAN.

As near yon rock we bore, that o'er the waves
Just shews its jetty point, and will, ere long,
Beneath the tide be hid, we heard the sound
Of feeble lamentation.

DE GREY.

A human voice?

THIRD FISHERMAN.

I cannot think it was;
For on that rock, sea-girt, and at high tide,

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Sea-cover'd, human thing there cannot be;
Though at the first it sounded in our ears
Like a faint woman's voice.

DE GREY.

Perceiv'd ye aught?

THIRD FISHERMAN.

Yes; something white that moved, and, as we think,
Some wounded bird that there hath dropt its wing,
And cannot make its way.

FOURTH FISHERMAN.

Perhaps some dog,
Whose master at low water there hath been,
And left him.

THIRD FISHERMAN.

Something 'tis in woeful case,
Whate'er it be. Right fain I would have gone
To bear it off.

DE GREY, (*eagerly.*)

And wherefore did'st thou not?
Return and save it. Be it what it may;
Something it is, lone and in jeopardy,
Which hath a feeling of its desperate state,

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And therefore doth to woe-worn, fearful man,
A kindred nature bear.—Return, good friend;—
Quickly return and save it, ere the tide
Shall wash it from its hold. I to the coast
Will steer the while, and wait your coming there.

THIRD FISHERMAN.

Right gladly, noble sir.

FOURTH FISHERMAN.

We'll gladly go:
For, by my faith! at night I had not slept
For thinking of that sound.

DE GREY.

Heaven speed ye then! Whate'er ye bring to me
Of living kind, I will reward ye for it.
Our different tracks we hold; nor longer here
Will I remain. Soon may we meet:
God speed ye!
(*Exeunt severally.*)

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SCENE III. *A Fisherman's House on the Mainland.*

Enter JOHN OF LORNE *and* SIR HUBERT DE GREY.

LORNE.

Then wait thou for thy boat; I and my men
Will onward to the town, where, as I hope,
My trusty vassals and our steeds are stationed.
But lose not time.

DE GREY.

Fear not; I'll follow quickly.

LORNE.

I must unto the castle of Argyll
Without delay proceed; therefore, whate'er
Of living kind, bird, beast, or creeping thing,
This boat of thine produces, bring it with thee;
And were it eaglet fierce, or wolf or fox,
On with us shall it travel, mounted bravely,
Our homeward cavalcade to grace. Farewell!

DE GREY.

Farewell, my friend! I shall not long delay
Thy homeward journey.

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LORNE, (*calling off the Stage.*)

But, ho! good host and hostess! (*To* De Grey.)
ere I go
I must take leave of honest Duncan here,
And of his rosy wife.—Ay, here they come.

Enter the HOST *and his* WIFE.

(*To* Host, *&c.*)

Farewell, my friends, and thanks be to ye both!
Good cheer, and kindly given, of you we've had.
Thy hand, good host. May all the fish o' th' ocean
Come crowding to thy nets!—And healthy brats,
Fair dame, have thou! with such round rosy cheeks
As brats of thine befit: and, by your leave,
(*Kissing her.*)
So be they kiss'd by all kind comers too!
Good luck betide ye both!

HOST.

And, sir, to you the same. Whoe'er you be,
A brave man art thou, that I will be sworn.

WIFE.

Come you this way again, I hope, good sir,
You will not pass our door.

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LORNE.

Fear not, good hostess;
It is a pleasant, sunny, open door,
And bids me enter of its own accord;
I cannot pass it by.—Good luck betide ye!
(*Exit, followed to the door by* Sir Hubert.)

HOST.

I will be sworn it is some noble chieftain,
Though homely be his garb.

WIFE.

Ay, so will I: the Lord of Lorne himself
Could not more courteous be.

HOST.

Hush! hush! be quiet!
We live not now amongst the Campbells, wife.
Should some Maclean o'erhear thee—hush, I say.
(*Eying* De Grey, *who returns from the door.*)
And this man too; right noble is his mien;
He is no common rambler. (*To* De Grey.)
By your leave,
If I may be so bold without offending,
Your speech, methinks, smacks of a southern race;
I guess at least of Lowland kin ye be.
But think no shame of this; we'll ne'ertheless

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Regard thee: thieves and cowards be not all
Who from the Lowlands come.

WIFE.

No; no, in sooth! I knew a Lowlander,
Some years gone by, who was as true and honest—
Ay, and I do believe well nigh as brave,
As though, with brogued feet, he never else
Had all his days than muir or mountain trode.

DE GREY.

Thanks for your gentle thoughts!—It has indeed
Been my misluck to draw my earliest breath
Where meadows flower, and corn fields wave i' th' sun.
But let us still be friends! heaven gives us not
To chuse our birth-place, else these wilds, no doubt,
Would be more thickly peopled.

HOST.

Ay, true it is indeed.

WIFE.

And hard it were
To quarrel with him too for his misfortune.
(*Noise heard without.*)

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DE GREY.

Ha! 'tis my boat return'd.

Enter FIRST FISHERMAN.

FIRST FISHERMAN.

Ay, here we are.

DE GREY.

And aught saved from the rock?

FIRST FISHERMAN.

Yes, by my faith! but neither bird nor beast.
Look there, my master. (*Pointing to the door.*)

Enter HELEN, *extremely exhausted, and almost senseless, wrapt closely up in one of their plaids, and supported by the other two* Fishermen.)

DE GREY.

A woman! heaven in mercy! was it then
A human creature there exposed to perish?

FIRST FISHERMAN, (*opening the plaid to shew her face.*)

Ay, look; and such a creature!

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DE GREY, (*starting back*).

Helen of Argyll!

O God! was this the feeble wailing voice!

(*Clasping his arms about her knees, as she stands almost senseless, supported by the* Fishermen, *and bursting into tears.*)

Could heart of man so leave thee? thou, of all
That lovely is, most lovely.—Woe is me!
Some aid, I pray ye. (*To* Host *and his* Wife.)
Bear her softly in,
And wrap warm garments round her.
Breathes she freely?
Her eyes half open are, but life, alas!
Is almost spent, and holds within her breast
A weak uncertain seat. (Helen *moves her hand.*)
She moves her hand:—
She knows my voice.—O heaven in mercy save her!
Bear her more gently, pray ye:—Softly, softly!
How weak and spent she is!

FIRST FISHERMAN.

No marvel she is weak: we reach'd her not
Until the swelling waters laved her girdle.
And then to see her——

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DE GREY.

Cease, I pray thee, friend,
And tell me not——

SECOND FISHERMAN.

Nay, faith, he tells you true:
She stood above the water, with stretched arms
Clung to the dripping rock, like the white pinions—

DE GREY.

Peace, peace, I say! thy words are agony:—
Give to my mind no image of the thing!

(*Exeunt, bearing Helen into an inner part of the house.*)

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ACT IV.

SCENE I. *A small Gothic Hall, or anti-room, in* Argyll's Castle, *a door at the bottom of the Stage, leading to the apartment of the* Earl, *before which is discovered the* Piper, *pacing backwards and forwards, playing on his bag-pipe.*

Enter DUGALD.

DUGALD.

Now pray thee, Piper, cease! That stunning din
Might do good service by the ears to set
Two angry clans; but for a morning's rouse,
Here at an old man's door, it does, good sooth,
Exceed all reasonable use. The Earl
Has pass'd a sleepless night: I pray thee now
Give o'er, and spare thy pains.

PIPER.

And spare my pains, say'st thou?—I'll do mine office,
As long as breath within my body is.

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DUGALD.

Then mercy on us all! if wind thou mean'st,
There is within that sturdy trunk of thine,
Old as it is, a still exhaustless store.
A Lapland witch's bag could scarcely match it.
Thou could'st, I doubt not, belly out the sails
Of a thrice-masted vessel with thy mouth:
But be thy mercy equal to thy might!
I pray thee now give o'er; in faith the Earl
Has pass'd a sleepless night.

PIPER.

Think'st thou I am a Lowland, day-hired minstrel
To play or stop at bidding? Is Argyll
The lord and chieftain of our ancient clan,
More certainly than I to him, as such,
The high hereditary piper am?
A sleepless night, forsooth! He's slept full oft
On the hard heath, with fifty harness'd steeds
Champing their fodder round him;---soundly too.—
I'll do mine office, loun, chafe as thou wilt.

(Continuing to pace up and down, and play as before.)

DUGALD.

Nay, thou the chafer art, red-crested cock!

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The Lord of Lorne has spoilt thee with indulging
Thy wilful humours. Cease thy cursed din!
See; here the Earl himself comes forth to chide
thee. (*Exit.*)

Enter ARGYLL, *attended, from the Chamber.*

ARGYLL.

Good morrow, Piper! thou hast roused me
bravely:
A younger man might gird his tartans on
With lightsome heart to martial sounds like these,
But I am old.

PIPER.

O no, my noble chieftain!
It is not age subdues you,

ARGYLL.

No; what else?

PIPER.

Alack! the flower and blossom of your house
The wind hath blown away to other towers.
When she was here, and gladsome faces brighten'd
With looking on her, and around your board
Sweet lays were sung, and gallants in the hall
Footed it trimly to our varied measures,

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There might, indeed, be found beneath your roof
Those who might reckon years fourscore and odds,
But of old folks, I warrant, ne'er a soul.
No; we were all young then.

ARGYLL, (*sighing deeply.*)
'Tis true indeed
It was even as thou say'st. Our earthly joys
Fly like the blossoms scattered by the wind.

Enter a SERVANT.

SERVANT.
Please ye, my lord;———
Some score of vassals in the hall attend
To bid good morrow to you, and the hour
Wears late: the chamberlain hath bade me say
He will dismiss them, if it please your honour.

ARGYLL.
Nay, many a mile have some of them, I know,
With suit or purpose lurking in their minds,
Rode o'er rough paths to see me; disappointed
Shall none of them return.—I'm better now.
I have been rather weary than unwell.
Say, I will see them presently. (*Exit* Servant.)

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Re-enter DUGALD *in haste.*

(*To* Dugald.)

Thou comest with a busy face: what tidings?

DUGALD.

The Lord of Lorne's arriv'd, an' please your honour:
Sir Hubert too, and all their jolly train;
And with them have they brought a lady, closely
In hood and mantle muffled: ne'er a glimpse
May of her face be seen.

ARGYLL.

A lady, say'st thou?

DUGALD.

Yes; closely muffled up.

ARGYLL, (*pacing up and down, somewhat disturbed.*)

I like not this.——It cannot surely be.—
(*Stopping short, and looking hard at* Dugald.)
Whence comes he?

DUGALD.

He a hunting went, I know,
To Cromack's ancient laird, whose youthful dame

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So famed for beauty is; but whence he comes,
I cannot tell, my lord.

ARGYLL, (*pacing up and down, as he speaks to himself in broken sentences, very much disturbed.*)
To Cromack's ancient laird!—If that indeed—
Beshrew me, if it be!—I'd rather lose
Half of my lands than son of mine such wrong,
Such shameful wrong, should do. This sword I've drawn
Like robb'ry to revenge, ne'er to abet it:
And shall I now with hoary locks——No, no!—
My noble Lorne! he cannot be so base.

Enter LORNE, *going up to* ARGYLL *with agitation.*

ARGYLL, (*eying him suspiciously.*)
Well, John, how is it? Welcome art thou home,
If thou return'st, as well I would believe,
Deserving of a welcome.

LORNE.
Doubts my lord
That I am so returned?
(*Aside to* Argyll, *endeavouring to draw him apart from his attendants.*)
Your ear, my father.—
Let these withdraw: I have a thing to tell you.

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ARGYLL, (*looking still more suspiciously upon* Lorne, *from seeing the eagerness and agitation with which he speaks, and turning from him indignantly.*)

No, by this honest blade! if wrong thou'st done,
Thou hast no shelter here. In open day,
Before th' assembled vassals shalt thou tell it;
And he, whom thou hast injured, be redress'd,
While I have power to bid my Campbells fight
I' the fair and honour'd cause.

LORNE.

I pray, my lord—
Will you vouchsafe to hear me?

ARGYLL.

Thoughtless boy!
How far unlike the noble Lorne I thought thee!—
Proud as I am, far rather would I see thee
Join'd to the daughter of my meanest vassal,
Than see thy manly, noble worth engaged
In such foul raid as this.

LORNE.

Nay, nay! be pacified!
I'd rather take, in faith, the tawny hand
Of homeliest maid, that doth, o' holidays,
Her sun-burnt locks with worsted ribbon bind,

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Fairly and freely won, than brightest dame
That e'er in stately bower or regal hall
In graceful beauty shone, gain'd by such wrong—
By such base treachery as you have glanced at.
These are plain words; then treat me like a man
Who hath been wont the manly truth to speak.

ARGYLL.

Ha! now thy countenance and tone again
Are John of Lorne's. That look, and whispering voice,
So strange appear'd, in truth I liked it not.
Give me thy hand.—Where is the stranger dame?
If she in trouble be———

LORNE, (*aside.*)

Make these withdraw,
And I will lead her hither.

(*Exit, while the* Earl *waves his hand, and* Dugald *and* Attendants, *&c. go out: presently re-enter* Lorne, *leading in* Helen, *covered closely up in a mantle.*)

LORNE.

This is the dame, who, houseless and deserted,
Seeks shelter here, nor fears to be rejected.

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HELEN, (*sinking down, and clasping* Argyll's *knees.*)
My father!

ARGYLL.

That voice!—O God!—Unveil—unveil, for mercy!
(*Tearing off the mantle that conceals her.*)
My child! my Helen!
(*Clasping her to his heart, and holding her there for some time, unable to speak.*)
My child! my dearest child!—my soul! my pride!
Deserted!—houseless!—com'st thou to me thus?
Here is thy house—thy home: this aged bosom
Thy shelter is, which thou shalt quit no more.
My child! my child!
(*Embracing her again;* Helen *and he weeping upon one another's necks.*)
Houseless! deserted!—'neath the cope of heaven
Breathes there a wretch who could desert thee?—
Speak,
If he hath so abused his precious trust,
If he—it makes me tear these hoary locks
To think what I have done!—Oh thoughtless father!
Thoughtless and selfish too!
(*Tearing his hair, beating his forehead with all the violent gestures of rage and grief.*)

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HELEN.

Oh, oh! forbear! It was not you, my father;
I gave myself away: I did it willingly:
We acted both for good; and now your love
Repays me richly---stands to me instead
Of many blessings.---Noble Lorne, besides---
O, he hath been to me so kind---so tender!
(*Taking her brother's hand, and pressing it to her breast; then joining her father's to it, and pressing them both ardently to her lips.*)
Say not I am deserted: heaven hath chid me---
Hath chid me sorely; but hath bless'd me too.---
O, dearly bless'd me!

ARGYLL.

Hath chid thee sorely!---how I burn to hear it!
What hast thou suffer'd?

LORNE.

We will not tell thee now. Go to thy chamber
And be a while composed. We have, my father,
A tale to tell that will demand of thee
Recruited strength to hear.---We'll follow thee.
(*Exeunt* Lorne, *supporting his* Father *and* Helen *into the Chamber.*)

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SCENE II. *The Garden of the Castle.*

Enter ARGYLL, LORNE, *and* SIR HUBERT DE GREY, *speaking as they enter.*

LORNE.

A month!—A week or two!—No, not an hour
Would I suspend our vengeance. Such atrocity
Makes e'en the little term between our summons
And the dark crowding round our martial pipes,
Of plumed bonnets nodding to the wind,
Most tedious seem: yea, makes the impatient foot
To smite the very earth beneath its tread,
For being fix'd and ertless.—

ARGYLL.

Be less impatient, John: thou canst not doubt
A father's keen resentment of such wrong:
But let us still be wise; this short delay
Will make revenge the surer; to its aim
A just direction give.

DE GREY.

The Earl is right:
We shall but work in the dark, impatient Lorne,
If we too soon begin.

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ARGYLL.

How far Maclean
Hath to this horrible attempt consented,
Or privy been, we may be certified,
By waiting silently to learn the tale
That he will tell us of his lady's loss,
When he shall send to give us notice of it,
As doubtless soon he will.

DE GREY.

If he, beset and threatened, to those fiends,
Unknowing of their purpose, hath unwillingly
Committed her, he will himself, belike,
If pride prevent him not, your aid solicit
To set him free from his disgraceful thraldom.

LORNE.

And if he should, shrunk be this sinew'd arm,
If it unsheath a weapon in his cause!
Let ev'ry ragged stripling on his lands
In wanton mock'ry mouth him with contempt!
Benlora head his vassals; and Lochtarish---
That serpent, full of ev'ry devilish wile,
His prison-keeper and his master be!

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DE GREY.

Ay; and the keeper also of his son,
The infant heir.

LORNE, (*starting.*)

I did not think of this.

ARGYLL.

Then let thy head-strong fury pause upon it.
Thanks to Sir Hubert's prudence! thou as yet
Before thy followers hast restrained been;
And who this lady is, whom to the castle,
Like a mysterious stranger, ye have brought,
From them remains conceal'd.--My brave De Grey!
This thy considerate foresight, join'd to all
Thy other service in this woeful matter,
Hath made us much thy debtor.

DE GREY.

I have indeed, my lord, considered only
What I believed would Helen's wishes be,
Ere she herself could utter them; if this
Hath proved equivalent to wiser foresight,
Let it direct us still; let Helen's wishes
Your measures guide.

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ARGYLL.

Ah, brave De Grey! would they had ever done so!
I had not now———
(*Taking* Sir Hubert's *hand with emotion.*)
Forgive me, noble youth!
Alas, alas! the father's tenderness
Before the chieftain's policy gave way,
And all this wreck hath been.

LORNE.

'Tis even so.
That cursed peace; that coward's shadeless face
Of smiles and promises, to all things yielding
With weak, unmanly pliancy, so gained you——
Even you, the wise Argyll!—It made me mad!
Who hath no point that he maintains against you,
No firmness hath to hold him of your side:
Who cannot sturdily against me stand,
And say, "encroach no farther," friend of mine
Shall never be.

DE GREY.

Nay, Lorne, forbear—forbear!
Thine own impetuous wilfulness did make
The other's pliant mind more specious seem;
And thou thyself did'st to that luckless union,

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Although unwittingly, assistance lend.
Make now amends for it, and curb thy spirit,
While that the Earl with calmer judgment waits
His time for action.

LORNE.

Beshrew me, but thy counsel strangely smacks
Of cautious timid age! In faith, De Grey,
But that I know thy noble nature well,
I could believe thee———

ARGYLL.

Peace, unruly spirit!
Bold as thou art, methinks, with locks like these,
Thy father still may say to thee, "be silent!"

LORNE, (*checking himself, and bowing very low to* Argyll.)

And be obeyed devoutly.—O forgive me!
Those locks are to your brows a kingly fillet
Of strong authority, to which my heart
No rebel is, though rude may be my words.
(*Taking* Sir Hubert's *hand with an assured countenance.*)
I ask not thee, De Grey, to pardon me.
Resistance here with gentleness is join'd,
Therefore I've loved thee, and have laid upon thee
The hand of sure possession; claiming still

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A friend's endurance of my froward temper,
Which, froward as it is, from thee hath borne
What never human being but thyself
Had dared to goad it with.

DE GREY.

It is indeed
Thy well-earned right thou askest, noble Lorne,
And it is yielded to thee cheerfully.

ARGYLL.

My aged limbs are tired with pacing here;
Some one approaches: within that grove
We'll find a shady seat, and there conclude
This well-debated point. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III. *A Court within the Castle, surrounded with Buildings.*

Enter DUGALD *and a* VASSAL, *two* Servants *at the same time crossing the Stage, with covered dishes in their hands.*

VASSAL.

I'll wait until the Earl shall be at leisure;
My business presses not. Where do they carry
Those cover'd meats? Have ye within the castle
Some noble prisoner?

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DUGALD.

Would so it were! but these are days of peace.
They bear them to the stranger dame's apartment,
Whom they have told thee of. There, at her door,
An ancient faithful handmaid of the house,
Whate'er they bring receives; for none besides
Of all the household is admitted.

VASSAL.

Now, by my fay! my purse and dirk I'd give
To know who this may be.—Some chieftain's lady
Whom John of Lorne——

DUGALD.

Nay, there, I must believe,
Thou guessest erringly.—I grant, indeed,
He doffs his bonnet to each tacks-man's wife,
And is with every coif amongst them all,
Both young and old, in such high favour held,
Nor maiden, wife, nor beldame of the clan
But to the Earl doth her petition bring
Through intercession of the Lord of Lorne;
But never yet did husband, sire, or brother,
Of wrong from him complain.

VASSAL.

I know it well.

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DUGALD.

But be she who she may,
This stranger here; I doubt not, friend, ere long,
We shall have bickering for her in the field
With some fierce foe or other.

VASSAL.

So I trust:
And, by my honest faith! this peace of ours
Right long and tiresome is.—I thought, ere now,
Some of our restless neighbours would have tres-
pass'd
And inroads made: but no; Argyll and Lorne
Have grown a terror to them: all is quiet;
And we ourselves must the aggressors be,
Or still this dull and slothful life endure,
Which makes our men of three-score years and ten
To fret and murmur.

Enter ROSA, *with a* Servant *conducting her.*

SERVANT, (*to* Dugald.)
A lady here, would see my Lord of Lorne.

DUGALD.
Yes, still to him they come. (*Looking at* Rosa.)

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Ha! see I rightly?
Rosa from Mull?

ROSA.

Yes, Dugald; here thou see'st
A woeful bearer of unwelcome tidings.

DUGALD.

What, hath thy lady sent thee?

ROSA.

Alas, alas! I have no lady now.

DUGALD.

Ha! is she dead? not many days ago
She was alive and well.—Hast thou so soon
The castle quitted—left thy lady's corse?

ROSA.

Think'st thou I would have left her?—On the night
When, as they say, she died, I from the castle
By force was ta'en, and to main-land convey'd;
Where in confinement I remain'd, till chance
Gave me the means of breaking from my prison;
And hither am I come, in woeful plight,
The dismal tale to tell.

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DUGALD.

A tale, indeed,
Most dismal, strange, and sudden.

ROSA.

How she died
God knows; but much I fear foul play she had.
Where is the Lord of Lorne? for first to him
I wish to speak.

DUGALD.

Come, I will lead thee to him —Had foul play!

VASSAL.

Fell fiends they are could shed her blood! If this
Indeed hath been, 'twill make good cause, I wot;
The warlike pipe will sound our summons soon.
(*Exeunt* Dugald *and* Rosa, *&c. as* Argyll *and* Sir Hubert *enter by the opposite side.*)

ARGYLL.

And wilt thou leave us then, my noble friend?
May we not still for some few days retain thee?

DE GREY.

Where'er I go, I carry in my heart
A warm remembrance of the friendly home

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That still within these hospitable walls
I've found; but longer urge me not to stay.
In Helen's presence now, constrained and strange,
With painful caution, chacing from my lips
The ready thought, half quiver'd into utterance,
For cold corrected words, expressive only
Of culprit consciousness,---I sit; nor even
May look upon her face but as a thing
On which I may not look; so painful now
The mingled feeling is, since dark despair
With one faint ray of hope hath temper'd been.
I can no more endure it. She herself
Perceives it, and it pains her.---Let me then
Bid you farewell, my lord. When evening comes,
I'll, under favour of the rising moon,
Set forth.

ARGYLL.

Indeed! so soon? and must it be?

DE GREY.

Yes; to Northumberland without delay
I fain would take my road. My aged father
Looks now impatiently for my return.

ARGYLL.

Then I'll no longer urge thee. To thy father,
The noble baron, once, in better days,

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My camp-mate and my friend, I must resign thee.
Bear to him every kind and cordial wish
An ancient friend can send, and——
(*A horn heard without*) Hark, that horn!
Some messenger of moment is arrived.——
We'll speak of this again.—The moon to-night
Is near the full, and at an early hour——

Enter a MESSENGER, *bearing a letter.*

Whose messenger art thou, who in thy hand
That letter bear'st with broad and sable seal,
Which seems to bring to me some dismal tidings?

MESSENGER.

From Mull, my lord, I come; and the Maclean,
Our chief, commissioned me to give you this,
Which is indeed with dismal tidings fraught.
(Argyll *opens the letter, and reads it with affected surprise and sorrow.*)

ARGYLL.

Heavy indeed and sudden is the loss—
The sad calamity that hath befallen.
The will of heaven be done!
(*Putting a handkerchief to his eyes, and leaning, as if for support, upon* Sir Hubert; *then, after a pause, turning to the* Messenger.)
How didst thou leave the chieftain? he, I hope,

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Permits not too much sorrow to o'ercome
His manhood: Doth he bear his grief composedly?

MESSENGER.

O no, it is most violent! At the funeral,
Had not the good Lochtarish, by his side,
Supported him, he had with very grief
Sunk to the earth.—And good Lochtarish too
Was in right great affliction.

ARGYLL.

Ay, good man;
I doubt it not.—Ye've had a splendid funeral?

MESSENGER.

O yes, my lord! that have we had. Good truth!
A grand and stately burial has it been.
Three busy days and nights through all the isle
Have bagpipes played, and sparkling beakers flowed;
And never corse, I trow, i' th' earth was laid
With louder lamentations.

ARGYLL.

Aye, I doubt not,
Their grief was loud enough.—Pray pass ye in.
(*To* Attendants *at a distance.*)
Conduct him there; and see that he be treated,

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After his tedious journey, as befits
A way-tired stranger.
(*Exeunt, all but* Argyll *and* Sir Hubert.)
This doth all hope and all belief exceed.
Maclean will shortly follow this his notice,
(*Giving* Sir Hubert *the letter.*)
To make me here a visit of condolence;
And thus within our power they put themselves
With most assured blindness.

DE GREY, (*after reading it.*)
'Tis Lochtarish,
In all the arts of dark hypocrisy
So deeply skill'd, who doth o'er-shoot his mark,
As such full often do.

ARGYLL.
And let him come!
At his own arts we trust to match him well.—
Their force, I guess, is not in readiness,
Therefore, meantime, to stifle all suspicion,
This specious mummery he hath devised;
And his most wretched chief, led by his will,
Most wretchedly submits.—Well, let us go
And tell to Lorne the news, lest too unguardedly
He should receive it. (*Exeunt.*)

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SCENE IV. *An Apartment in the Castle.*

Enter SIR HUBERT DE GREY, *beckoning to* ROSA, *who appears on the opposite side.*

DE GREY.

Rosa; I pray thee, spare me of thy leisure
Some precious moments: something would I say:
Wilt thou now favour me?

ROSA.

Most willingly.

DE GREY.

As yet thy mistress knows not of the letter
Sent by Maclean, announcing his design
Of paying to the Earl this sudden visit—
This mockery of condolence?

ROSA.

No; the Earl
Forbade me to inform her.

DE GREY.

This is well;

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Her mind must be prepared. Meantime I go,
And thou art here to comfort and attend her:
O do it gently, Rosa! do it wisely!

ROSA.

You need not doubt my will.—Go ye so soon;
And to Northumberland?

DE GREY.

So I intended,
And so Argyll and John of Lorne believe:
But since this messenger from Mull arrived,
Another thought has struck me.—Said'st thou not
The child—thy lady's child, ta'en from the castle,
Is to the keeping of Lochtarish's mother
Committed, whose lone house is on the shore?

ROSA.

Yes, whilst in prison pent, so did I hear
My keeper say, and much it troubled me.

DE GREY.

Canst thou to some good islander commend me,
Within whose house I might upon the watch
Conceal'd remain?—It is to Mull I go,
And not to England. While Maclean is here,
Attended by his vassals, the occasion
I'll seize to save the infant.

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ROSA.

Bless thee for it!
Heaven bless thee for the thought!—I know a man—
An aged fisherman, who will receive you;
Uncle to Morton: and if he himself
Still in the island be, there will you find him,
Most willing to assist you.

DE GREY.

Hush, I pray,
I hear thy lady's steps.

ROSA.

Near to the castle gate, ere you depart,
I'll be in waiting to inform you farther
Of what may aid your purpose.

DE GREY.

Do, good Rosa,
And make me much thy debtor. But be secret.

ROSA.

You need not doubt me.

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Enter HELEN, *and* De Grey *goes up to her as if he would speak, but the words faulter on his lips, and he is silent.*

HELEN.

Alas! I see it is thy parting visit;
Thou com'st to say "farewell!"

DE GREY.

Yes, Helen: I am come to leave with thee
A friend's dear benison——a parting wish——
A last———Rest ev'ry blessing on thy head!
Be this permitted to me:
(*Kissing her hand with profound respect.*)
Fare thee well!
Heaven aid and comfort thee! Farewell! farewell!
(*Is about to retire hastily, whilst* Helen *follows to prevent him.*)

HELEN.

O go not from me with that mournful look!
Alas! thy gen'rous heart, depress'd and sunk,
Looks on my state too sadly.——
I am not, as thou think'st, a thing so lost
In woe and wretchedness.—Believe not so!
All whom misfortune with her rudest blasts
Hath buffeted, to gloomy wretchedness

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Are not therefore abandoned. Many souls
From cloister'd cells, from hermits' caves, from holds
Of lonely banishment, and from the dark
And dreary prison-house, do raise their thoughts
With humble cheerfulness to heaven, and feel
A hallowed quiet, almost akin to joy;
And may not I, by heaven's kind mercy aided,
Weak as I am, with some good courage bear
What is appointed for me?——O be cheer'd!
And let not sad and mournful thoughts of me
Depress thee thus.—When thou art far away,
Thou'lt hear, the while, that in my father's house
I spend my peaceful days, and let it cheer thee.
I too shall ev'ry southern stranger question,
Whom chance may to these regions bring, and learn
Thy fame and prosperous state.

DE GREY.

My fame and prosperous state, while thou art thus!
If thou in calm retirement liv'st contented,
Lifting thy soul to heaven, what lack I more?
My sword and spear, changed to a pilgrim's staff,
Will be a prosperous state; and for my fame,—
A feeble sound that after death remains,
The echo of an unrepeated stroke

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That fades away to silence,—surely this
Thou dost not covet for me.

HELEN.

Ah, I do!
Yet, granting here I err, didst thou not promise
To seek in wedded love and active duties
Thy share of cheerful weal?—and dost thou now
Shrink from thy gen'rous promise?—No, thou shalt not.
I hold thee bound—I claim it of thee boldly.
It is my right. If thou, in sad seclusion,
A lonely wanderer art, thou dost extinguish
The ray that should have cheer'd my gloom: thou makest
What else had been a calm and temper'd sorrow,
A state of wretchedness.—O no! thou wilt not!
Take to thy gen'rous heart some virtuous maid,
And doubt not thou a kindred heart wilt find.
The cheerful tenderness of woman's nature
To thine is suited, and when join'd to thee,
Will grow in virtue:—Take thou then this ring,
If thou wilt honour so my humble gift,
And put it on her hand; and be assured
She who shall wear it,—she whose happy fate
Is link'd with thine, will prove a noble mate.

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DE GREY.

O there I am assured! she whose fate
Is link'd with mine, if fix'd be such decree,
Most rich in ev'ry soft and noble trait
Of female virtue is: in this full well
Assured I am.——I would---I thought---forgive---
I speak but raving words:---a hasty spark,
Blown and extinguish'd, makes me waver thus.
Permit me then again, ! (*Kissing her hand.*)
High heaven protect thee!
Farewell!

HELEN.

Farewell! and heaven's good charge be thou!

(*They part, and both turn away to opposite sides of the Stage, when* Sir Hubert, *looking round just as he is about to go off, and seeing* Helen *also looking after him, sorrowfully, eagerly returns.*)

DE GREY.

Ah! are those looks——

(*Going to kneel at her feet, but immediately checking himself with much embarrassment.*)

Alas! why come I back?

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Something there was——Thou gavest me a ring;
I have not dropt it?

ROSA, (*coming forward.*)
No, 'tis on your finger.

DE GREY.
Ay, true, good Rosa; but my wits are wilder'd;
I knew not what I sought.—
Farewell! farewell!
(*Exit* De Grey *hastily, while* Helen *and* Rosa *go off by the opposite side.*)

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ACT V.

SCENE I. Argyll's Castle, *the Vestibule, or grand entrance; a noise of bustle and voices heard without, and* Servants *seen crossing the Stage, as the scene opens.*

Enter DUGALD, *meeting* FIRST SERVANT.

DUGALD.

They are arrived, Maclean and all his train;
Run quickly, man, and give our chieftains notice.

FIRST SERVANT.

They know already: from the tower we spied
The mournful cavalcade: the Earl and Lorne
Are down the stair-case hasting to receive them.

DUGALD.

I've seen them light, a sooty-coated train,
With lank and woeful faces, and their eyes
Bent to the ground, as though our castle gate

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Had been the scutcheon'd portal of a tomb,
Set open to receive them.

SECOND SERVANT.

Ay, on the pavement fall their heavy steps
Measured and slow, as if her palled coffin
They follow'd still.

DUGALD.

Hush, man! Here comes the Earl,
With face composed and stern; but look behind him
How John of Lorne doth gnaw his nether lip,
And beat his clenched hand against his thigh,
Like one who tampers with half-bridled ire!

SECOND SERVANT.

Has any one offended him?

DUGALD.

Be silent,
For they will overhear thee.——Yonder too
(*Pointing to the opposite side of the stage.*)
Come the Macleans: let us our stations keep,
And see them meet.
(*Retiring with the other to the bottom of the stage.*)

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Enter ARGYLL *and* LORNE, *attended, and in deep mourning; while, at the same time, by the opposite side of the stage, enter* MACLEAN, BENLORA, LOCHTARISH *and* GLENFADDEN, *with* Attendants, *also in deep mourning:* Argyll *and* Maclean *go up to one another, and formally embrace.*)

ARGYLL.

Welcome! if such a cheerful word as this
May with our deep affliction suited be.
Lochtarish too, and brave Benlora, aye,
And good Glenfadden also,—be ye all
With due respect received, as claims your worth.

(*Taking them severally by the hand as he names them.* Maclean *then advances to embrace* Lorne, *who shrinks back from him, but immediately correcting himself, bends his body another way, as if suddenly seized with some violent pain.*)

ARGYLL, (*to* Maclean.)

Regard him not: he hath imprudently
A recent wound exposed to chilling air,
And oft the pain with sudden pang attacks him.

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LOCHTARISH.

Ay, what is shrewder? we have felt the like,
And know it well, my lord.

ARGYLL, (*bowing to* Lochtarish, *but continuing to speak to* Maclean.)

Yet, ne'ertheless, good son-in-law and chieftain,
Believe thou well that with a brother's feelings,
Proportion'd to the dire and dismal case
That hath befallen, he now receives you, also
Receiving these your friends with equal favour.
This is indeed to us a woeful meeting,
Chieftain of Mull.
(*Looking keenly in his face, while the other shuns his eye.*)
I see full well the change
Which violent grief upon that harrow'd visage
So deeply hath impress'd.

MACLEAN, (*still embarrassed, and shrinking from* Argyll's *observation.*)

Ah! ah! the woeful day!—I cannot speak.
Alas, alas!

ARGYLL.

Alas, in truth,

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Too much the woeful widower's alter'd looks
Upon thy face I see.

LOCHTARISH, (*to* Argyll.)

You see, my lord, his eyes with too much weeping
Are weak, and shun the light. Nor should we marvel:
What must to him the sudden loss have been,
When even to us, who were more distantly
Connected with her rare and matchless virtue,
It brought such keen affliction?

ARGYLL.

Yes, good Lochtarish, I did give her to ye—
To your right worthy chief, a noble creature,
With every kindly virtue—every grace
That might become a noble chieftain's wife:
And that ye have so well esteem'd—so well
Regarded, cherish'd, and respected her,
As your excessive sorrow now declares,
Receive from me a grateful father's thanks.
Lochtarish, most of all to thy good love
I am beholden.

LOCHTARISH.

Ah! small was the merit
Such goodness to respect.

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ARGYLL.

And thou, Benlora;
A woman, and a stranger, on the brave
Still potent claims maintain; and little doubt I
They were by thee regarded.
(Benlora *steps back, frowning sternly, and remains silent.*)
And, Glenfadden,
Be not thy merits overlook'd.

GLENFADDEN.

Alas!
You over-rate, my lord, such slender service.

ARGYLL.

Wrong not, I pray, thy modest worth.—But here, (*turning again to* Maclean.)
Here most of all, from whom her gentle virtues,
(And so indeed it right and fitting was,)
Their best and dearest recompense received,
To thee, most generous chieftain, let me pay
The thanks that are thy due.

MACLEAN.

Oh, oh! alas!

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ARGYLL.

Ay, in good sooth! I see thy grief-worn eyes
Do shun the light.
But grief is ever sparing of her words.
In brief, I thank you all: and for the love
Ye have so dearly shewn to me and mine,
I trust, before we part, to recompense ye
As suits your merit and my gratitude.

LORNE, (*aside to* Argyll.)

Ay, father; now ye speak to them shrewd words;
And now I'm in the mood to back you well.

ARGYLL, (*aside to* Lorne.)

'Tis well thou art; but check those eager looks;
Lochtarish eyes thee keenly.

(*Directing a hasty glance to* Lochtarish, *who is whispering to* Glenfadden, *and looking suspiciously at* Lorne.)

LORNE, (*stepping forward to* Maclean, *&c.*)

Chieftain, and honour'd gentlemen, I pray
The sullen, stern necessity excuse
Which pain imposed upon me, and receive,
Join'd with my noble father's, such poor thanks
As I may offer to your loving worth.

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ARGYLL.

Pass on, I pray ye; till the feast be ready,
Rest ye above, where all things are prepared
For your refreshment. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II. *A narrow arched Room or Closet, adjoining to a Gallery.*

Enter LOCHTARISH *and* GLENFADDEN.

LOCHTARISH.

How lik'st thou this, Glenfadden? doth the face
Argyll assumes, of studied courtesy,
Raise no suspicion?

GLENFADDEN.

Faith, I know not well!—
The speech, indeed, with which he welcomed us,
Too wordy, and too artificial seem'd
To be the native growth of what he felt.

LOCHTARISH.

It so to me appear'd: and John of Lorne,
First shrinking from Maclean, with sudden pain,
As he pretended, struck, then stern and silent,
Till presently assuming, like his father,
A courtesy, minute, and over-studied,

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He glozed us with his thanks:——
Didst thou not mark his keenly flashing eye,
When spoke Argyll of recompensing us
Before we part?

GLENFADDEN.

I did indeed observe it.

LOCHTARISH.

This hath a meaning.

GLENFADDEN.

Faith, I do suspect
Some rumour must have reach'd their ear; and yet
Our agents faithful are; it cannot be.

LOCHTARISH.

Or can, or can it not, beneath this roof
A night I will not sleep. When evening comes,
Meet we again. If at this banquet, aught
Shall happen to confirm our fears, forthwith
Let us our safety seek in speedy flight.

GLENFADDEN.

And leave Maclean behind us?

LOCHTARISH.

Ay, and Benlora too. Affairs the better

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At Mull will thrive, when we have rid our hands
Of both these hind'rances, who in our way
Much longer may not be. (*Listening.*)
We're interrupted.
Let us into the gallery return,
And join the company with careless face,
Like those who have from curiosity
But stepp'd aside to view the house.—Make haste!
It is Argyll and Lorne.

(*Exeunt, looking to the opposite side, alarmed, at which enter* Argyll *and* Lorne.)

LORNE.

Are you not now convinced? his conscious guilt
Is in his downcast and embarrass'd looks,
And careful shunning of all private converse
Whene'er aside you've drawn him from his train,
Too plainly seen: you cannot now, my lord,
Doubt of his share in this atrocious deed.

ARGYLL.

Yet, Lorne, I would, ere further we proceed,
Prove it more fully still. The dinner hour
Is now at hand. (*Listening.*)
What steps are those,
That in the gallery, close to this door,
Like some lone straggler from the company

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Withdrawn, sound quickly pacing to and fro?
Look out and see.

(Lorne, *going to the door, and calling back to* Argyll *in a low voice.*)

It is Maclean himself.

ARGYLL.

Beckon him hither then.—Thank heaven for this!
Now opportunity is fairly given,
If that constrainedly he cloaks their guilt,
To free him from their toils.

Enter MACLEAN, *conducted by* Lorne.

ARGYLL, (*to* Maclean.)

My son, still in restraint before our vassals
Have we conversed; but now in privacy——
Start not, I pray thee:—Sit thee down, Maclean:
I would have close and private words of thee:
Sit down, I pray; my aged limbs are tired.

(Argyll *and* Maclean *sit down, whilst* Lorne *stands behind them, with his ear bent eagerly to listen, and his eyes fixed with a side-glance on* Maclean.)

Chieftain, I need not say to thee, who deeply
Lament'st with us our sad untimely loss,
How keenly I have felt it.———

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And now indulge a father in his sorrow,
And say how died my child.—Was her disease
Painful as it was sudden?

MACLEAN.

It was—alas! I know not how it was.
A fell disease!—Her end was so appointed.

LORNE, (*behind.*)

Ay, that I doubt not.

MACLEAN.

A fearful malady! though it received
All good assistance.

LORNE, (*behind.*)

That I doubt not either.

MACLEAN.

A cruel ill!—but how it dealt with her,
My grief o'erwhelm'd me so, I could not tell.

ARGYLL.

Say—Wert thou present? didst thou see her die?

MACLEAN.

Oh, oh! the woeful sight, that I should see it!

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ARGYLL.

Thou didst not see it then?

MACLEAN.

Alack! alack!
O would that I had seen——O woe is me!
Her pain—her agony was short to mine!

LORNE, (*behind, impatiently.*)

Is this an answer, chieftain, to the question
Argyll hath plainly ask'd thee?—Wert thou present
When Helen died? didst thou behold her death?

MACLEAN.

O yes; indeed I caught your meaning lamely;
I meant—I thought—I know not certainly
The very time and moment of her death,
Although within my arms she breathed her last.

LORNE, (*rushing forward eagerly.*)

Now are we answered.

(Argyll, *covering his face with his hands, throws himself back in his chair for some time without speaking.*)

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MACLEAN, (*to* Argyll.)
I fear, my lord, too much I have distress'd you.

ARGYLL.
Somewhat you have indeed.—And further now
I will not press your keen and recent sorrow
With questions that so much renew its anguish.

MACLEAN.
You did, belike, doubt of my tenderness.

ARGYLL.
O no! I have no doubts.—Within your arms
She breath'd her last?

MACLEAN.
Within my arms she died.

ARGYLL, (*looking hard at* Maclean, *and then turning away.*)
His father was a brave and honest chief!

MACLEAN.
What says my lord?

ARGYLL.
A foolish exclamation,

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Of no determined meaning. (*Bell sounds without.*)
Dry our tears:
The hall-bell warns us to the ready feast;
And through the gallery I hear the sound
Of many footsteps hastening to the call.
Chieftain, I follow thee.

(*Exeunt* Argyll *and* Maclean.)

LORNE, (*alone, stopping to listen.*)
The castle, throng'd throughout with moving life
From every winding stair, and arched aisle
A mingled echo sends.
Ay; light of foot, I hear their sounding steps
A-trooping to the feast, who never more
At feast shall sit or social meal partake.
O wretch! O fiend of vile hypocrisy!
How fiercely burns my blood within my veins
Till I am matched with thee! (*Exit.*)

SCENE III. *The Great Hall of the Castle, with a Feast set out, and the Company already placed at Table, with* Servants *and* Attendants *in waiting, who fill the Stage in every part:* Argyll *is seated at the head of the table, with* Maclean *on his left hand, and a chair left empty on his right.*

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ARGYLL, (*to* Maclean, &c.)

Most worthy chief, and honoured guests and kinsmen,
I crave your pardon for this short delay:
One of our company is wanting still,
For whom we have reserved this empty place;
Nor will the chief of Mull unkindly take it,
That on our better hand this chair of honour
Is for a lady kept.

Omnes.

A lady! (*A general murmur of surprise is heard through the hall.*)

ARGYLL.

Yes;
Who henceforth of this house the mistress is;
And were it palace of our Scottish king,
Would so deserve to be.

Omnes.

We give you joy, my lord.
(*A confused murmur heard again.*)

MACLEAN.

We give you joy, my lord: your age is bless'd.

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We little thought in these our funeral weeds,
A bridal feast to darken.

LORNE.

No, belike.
Many who d'on their coat at break of day,
Know not what shall befall them, therein girt,
Ere ev'ning close. (*Assuming a gay tone.*)
The Earl hath set a step-dame o'er my head
To cow my pride —What think ye, brave Maclean?
This world so fleeting is and full of change,
Some lose their wives I trow, and others find them.
Bridegrooms and widowers do, side by side,
Their beakers quaff; and which of them at heart
Most glad or sorry is, the subtle fiend,
Who in men's hollow hearts his council holds,
He wotteth best, though each good man will swear,
His *lost* or *found* all other dames excell'd.

ARGYLL.

Curb, Lorne, thy saucy tongue: Maclean himself
Shall judge if she—the lady I have found,
Equal in beauty she whom he hath lost.
In worth I'm sure she does.—But hush! she comes.
(*A great commotion through the Hall amongst the* Attendants, *&c.*)

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Omnes.
It is the lady.

ARGYLL, (*rising from his seat, and making signs to the* Attendants *nearest the door.*)
Ho, there! make room, and let the lady pass.
(*The* Servants, *&c. stand apart, ranging themselves on every side to let the Lady pass; and enter* Helen, *magnificently dressed, with a deep white veil over her face; while* Lorne, *going forward to meet her, conducts her to her chair on* Argyll's *right hand.*)

ARGYLL, (*to the* Campbells.)
Now, fill a cup of welcome to our friends.

LOCHTARISH, (*to* Maclean.)
Chieftain, forgettest thou to greet the lady?

MACLEAN, (*turning to* Argyll.)
Nay, rather give, my lord, might I presume,
On firstling cup to this fair lady's health,
The noble dame of this right princely house.
And, though close veil'd she be, her beauty's lustre
I little question.
(*Fills up a goblet, while* Lochtarish, Benlora, *&c.*

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follow his example, and, standing up, bows to the Lady.)

Your health, most noble dame.

(Helen, *rising also, bows to him, and throws back her veil: The cup falls from his hands; all the company start up from table; screams and exclamations of surprise are heard from all corners of the Hall, and confused commotion seen every where.* Maclean, Lochtarish, *and* Glenfadden, *stand appalled and motionless; but* Benlora, *looking fiercely round him, draws his sword.*)

BENLORA.

What! are we here like deer bay'd in a nook?
And think ye so to slay us, crafty foe?
No, by my faith! like such we will not fall,
Arms in our hands, though by a thousand foes
Encompass'd.—Cruel, murderous, ruthless men,
Too good a warrant have ye now to think us,
But cowards never!——
Rouse ye, base Macleans!
And thou, whose subtlety around us thus
With wreckful skill these cursed toils have wound,
Sinks thy base spirit now? (*To* Lochtarish.)

ARGYLL, (*holding up his hand.*)
Be silence in the hall!

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Macleans, ye are my guests; but if the feast
Delight ye not, free leave ye have to quit it.
Lorne, see them all, with right due courtesy,
Safely protected to the castle gate.
(*Turning to* Maclean.)
Here, other name than chieftain or Maclean
He may not give thee; but, without our walls,
If he should call thee murderer, traitor, coward,
Weapon to weapon, let your fierce contention
Be fairly held, and he, who first shall yield,
The liar be.——
Campbells! I charge ye there,
Free passage for the chieftain and his train.

(Maclean *and* Lochtarish, *&c. without speaking, quit the Hall through the crowd of* Attendants *who divide and form a lane to let them pass.* Helen, *who had sunk down almost senseless upon her seat, seeing the hall cleared of the crowd who go out after the* Macleans, *now starts up, and catches hold of* Argyll *with an imploring look of strong distress.*)

HELEN.

O father! well I know foul are his crimes,
But what—O what, am I, that for my sake
This bloody strife should be?—O think, my lord!
He gave consent and sanction to my death,
But thereon could not look: and at your gate—

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Ev'n on your threshold, must his life be ta'en?
For well I know the wroth of Lorne is deadly.
And gallant Lorne himself, if scaith should be,—
O pity! pity!—O for pity stay them!

ARGYLL.

Let go thy hold, weak woman: pity now!
Rosa, support her hence.

(*Committing her to* Rosa, *who now comes forward, and tearing himself away.*)

HELEN, (*endeavouring to run after him, and catch hold of him again.*)

O be not stern! beneath the ocean rather
Would I had sunk to rest than been the cause
Of horrid strife like this. O pity! pity!

(*Exeunt, she running out after him, distractedly.*)

SCENE IV. *Before the Gate of the Castle: a confused noise of an approaching crowd heard within, and presently enter, from the Gate,* MACLEAN, BENLORA, LOCHTARISH, *and* GLENFADDEN, *with their* Attendants, *conducted by* LORNE, *and followed by a crowd of* Campbells, *who range themselves on both sides of the Stage.*

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LORNE, (*to* Maclean.)

Now, chieftain, we the gate have pass'd,—the bound
That did restrain us. Host and guest no more,
But deadly foes we stand, who from this spot
Shall never both with life depart. Now, turn,
And boldly say to him, if so thou darest,
Who calls thee villain, murd'rer, traitor, coward,
That he belies thee. Turn then, Chief of Mull!
Here, man to man, my single arm to thine,
I give thee battle; or, refusing this,
Our captive here retain thee, to be tried
Before the summon'd vassals of our clans,
As suits thy rank and thine atrocious deeds.
Take thou thy choice.

MACLEAN.

Yes, John of Lorne, I turn.
This turf on which we tread my death-bed *is*;
This hour my latest term; this sky of light
The last that I shall look on. Draw thy sword:
The guilt of many crimes o'erwhelms my spirit;
But never will I shame my brave Macleans,
By dying, as their chief, a coward's death.

BENLORA.

What! shalt thou fight alone, and we stand by

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Idly to look upon it? (*Going up fiercely to* Lorne.)
Turn me out
The boldest, brawniest Campbell of your bands;
Aye, more than one, as many as you will;
And I the while, albeit these locks be grey,
Leaning my aged back against this tree,
Will show your youngsters how, in other days,
Macleans did fight, when baited round with foes.

LORNE.

Be still, Benlora; other sword than these,
Thy chief's and mine, shall not this day be drawn.
If I prevail against him, here with us
Our captives you remain. If I am conquer'd,
Upon the faith and honour of a chieftain,
Ye shall again to Mull in safety go.

BENLORA.

Spoke like a noble chieftain!

LORNE.

Ye shall, I say, to Mull in safety go.
But there prepare ye to defend your coast
Against a host of many thousand Campbells;
In which, be well assured, swords as good
As John of Lorne's, to better fortune join'd,
Shall of your crimes a noble vengeance take.
(Lorne *and* Maclean *fight*; *and, after a combat of*

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some length, Maclean *is mortally wounded, and the* Campbells *give a loud shout.*

MACLEAN.

It is enough, brave Lorne; this wound is death:
And better deed thou couldst not do upon me,
Than rid me of a life disgraced and wretched.
But guilty though I be, thou see'st full well,
That to the brave opposed, arms in hand,
I am no coward.——Oh! could I as bravely,
In home-rais'd broils, with violent men have strove,
It had been well: but there, alas! I proved
A poor, irresolute, and nerveless wretch.
(*After a pause, and struggling for breath.*)
To live, alas! in good men's memories
Detested and contemn'd:—to be with her
For whom I thought to be-----Come, gloomy grave!
Thou cover'st all!
(*After another painful struggle, every one standing in deep silence round him, and* Lorne *bending over him compassionately.*)
Pardon of man I ask not,
And merit not—Brave Lorne, I ask it not;
Though in thy piteous eye a look I see
That might embolden me.——There is above
One who doth know the weakness of our nature,—
Our thoughts and conflicts:—All that e'er have breathed;

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The bann'd and bless'd must pass to Him :---My soul
Into his hands, in humble penitence,
I do commit. *(Dies.)*

LORNE.

And may heaven pardon thee, unhappy man!

Enter ARGYLL, *and* HELEN *following him, attended by* ROSA.

LORNE, (*to* Attendants.)
Alas, prevent her!
(Endeavouring to keep her back.)
Helen, come not hither:
This is no sight for thee.

HELEN, *(pressing forward, and seeing the body.)*
Oh! oh! and hast thou dealt with him so quickly,
Thou fell and ruthless Lorne?---No time allow'd!---
(Kneeling by the body)
O that within that form sense still were lodged!
To hear my voice,---to know that in my heart
No thought of thee——Let others scan thy deeds,
Pitied and pardon'd art thou here.
(Her hand on her breast.)
Alas!
So quickly fell on thee th' avenging stroke!

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No sound of peace came to thy dying ear,
No look of pity to thy closing eyes!
Pitied and pardon'd art thou in this breast,
But canst not know it now.---Alas! alas!

ARGYLL, (*to* Attendants.)

Prepare ye speedily to move the body.
Mean time, our prisoners within the castle
Secure ye well.

(*To other* Attendants, *who lay hold of* Lochtarish *and* Glenfadden, *while* Benlora, *drawing his sword, attacks furiously those who attempt to seize and disarm him, and they, closing round and endeavouring to overpower him, he is mortally wounded in the scuffle.*)

BENLORA.

Ay, bear me now within your prison walls:
Alive, indeed, thought ye to bind me? No.
Two years within your dungeons have I lived,
But lived for vengeance: closed that hope, the earth
Close o'er me too!---Alive to bind Benlora!

(*Falls.*)

LORNE, (*running up to him.*)

Ha! have ye slain him?---Fierce and warlike spirit!
I'm glad that thou hast had a soldier's death,

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Arms in thy hands, all savage as thou art.
(*Turning to* Lochtarish *and* Glenfadden.)
But thou, the artful, base, contriving villain,
Who hast of an atrocious, devilish act
The mover been, and this thy vile associate,
Prepare ye for the villain's shameful end,
Ye have so dearly earn'd.
(*Waving his hand for the* Attendants *to lead them off.*

LOCHTARISH.

Be not so hasty, Lorne.—Think'st thou indeed
Ye have us here within your grasp, and nought
Of hostage or security retain'd
For our protection?

LORNE.

What dost thou mean?

LOCHTARISH.

Deal with us as ye will:
But if within a week, return'd to Mull,
In safety I appear not, with his blood,
The helpless heir, thy sister's infant son,
Who in my mother's house our pledge is kept,
Must pay the forfeit.

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HELEN, *(starting up from the body in an agony of alarm.)*

O horrible! ye will not murder him?
Murder a harmless infant!

LOCHTARISH.

My aged mother, lady, loves her son
As thou dost thine; and she has sworn to do it.

HELEN.

Has sworn to do it! Oh! her ruthless nature
Too well I know. *(To* Lorne *eagerly.)*
Loose them, and let them go.

LORNE.

Let fiends like these escape?

ARGYLL, (*to* Helen.)

He does but threaten
To move our fears: they dare not slay the child.

HELEN.

They dare! they will!—O if thou art my father!
If Nature's hand e'er twined me to thy heart
As this poor child to mine, have pity on me!
Loose them and let them go!—Nay, do it quickly.
O what is vengeance! Spare my infant's life.

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Unpitying Lorne! art thou a brother too?
The hapless father's blood is on thy sword,
And wilt thou slay the child! O spare him! spare him!

(*Kneeling to* Argyll *and* Lorne, *who stand irresolute, when enter* Sir Hubert de Grey, *carrying something in his arms, wrapped up in a mantle, and followed by* Morton. *On seeing* Sir Hubert, *she springs from the ground, and rushes forward to him.*)

Ha! art thou here? in blessed hour return'd
To join thy prayers with mine,—to move their hearts—
Their flinty hearts;—to bid them spare my child!

DE GREY, *(lifting up the mantle, and shewing a sleeping Child.)*

The prayer is heard already: look thou here
Beneath this mantle where he soundly sleeps.

(Helen *utters a cry of joy, and holds out her arms for the Child, but at the same time sinks to the ground, embracing the knees of* Sir Hubert. Argyll *and* Lorne *run up to him, and all their* Vassals, *&c. crowding round, close them about on every side, while a general murmur of exultation is heard through the whole.* Lochtarish *and* Glenfadden, *remaining on the side of the Stage*

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with those who guard them, are struck with astonishment and consternation.)

ARGYLL, (*to those who guard* Lochtarish, *&c. stepping forward from the crowd.*)

Lead to the grated Keep your prisoners,
There to abide their doom. Upon the guilty
Our vengeance falls, and only on the guilty.
To all their clan besides, in which I know
Full many a gallant heart included is,
I still extend a hand of amity.
If they reject it, fair and open war
Between us be: and trust we still to find them
The noble, brave Macleans, the valiant foes,
That, ere the dark ambition of a villain,
For wicked ends, their gallant minds had warp'd,
We heretofore have found them.
O that men
In blood so near, in country, and in valour,
Should spend in petty broils their manly strength,
That might, united for the public weal,
On foreign foes such noble service do!
O that the day were come when gazing southron,
Whilst these our mountain warriors, marshalled forth
To meet in foreign climes their country's foes,
Along their crowded cities slowly march,
To sound of warlike pipe, their plaided bands,

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Shall say, with eager fingers pointing thus,
" Behold those men !—their sunn'd but thoughtful brows:
Their sinewy limbs ; their broad and portly chests,
Lapp'd in their native vestments, rude but graceful !—
Those be our hardy brothers of the north ;—
The bold and generous race, who have, beneath
The frozen circle and the burning line,
The rights and freedom of our native land
Undauntedly maintain'd."
That day will come,
When in the grave this hoary head of mine,
And many after heads, in death are laid ;
And happier men, our sons, shall live to see it.
O may they prize it too with grateful hearts !
And, looking back on these our stormy days
Of other years, pity, admire, and pardon
The fierce, contentious, ill-directed valour
Of gallant fathers, born in darker times.
(The Curtain drops.)

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EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY HENRY MACKENZIE, ESQ.

SPOKEN BY MRS H. SIDDONS,*

In her ordinary Dress.

WELL! here I am, those scenes of suff'ring o'er,
Safe among you, " a widowed thing" no more;
And though some squeamish critics still contend
That not so soon the tragic tone should end,
Nor flippant Epilogue, with smiling face,
Elbow her serious sister from the place;
I stand prepared with precedent and custom,
To plead the adverse doctrine—Wont you trust 'em?
I think you will, and now the curtain's down,
Unbend your brows, nor on my prattle frown.
You've seen how, in our country's ruder age,
Our moody lords would let their vassals rage,
And while they drove men's herds, and burnt their houses,
To some lone isle condemn'd their own poor spouses;
Their portion—drowning when the tide should serve;
Their separate aliment—a leave to starve;
And for the Scottish rights of *Dower* and *Tierce*,
A deep-sea burial, and an empty hearse.

---

* The Prologue was spoken by Mr TERRY.

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Such was of old the fuss about this matter;
In our good times 'tis managed greatly better;
When modern ladies part with modern lords,
Their business no such tragic tale affords;
Their "Family Legends," in the *Charter-chest*,
In deeds of ink, not deeds of blood, consist;
In place of ruffians ambushed in the dark,
Comes, with his pen, a harmless lawyer's clerk,
Draws a long—bond, my lady packs her things,
And leaves her mate to smooth his ruffled wings.
In the free code of first enlighten'd France,
Marriage was broke for want of *convenance*;
No fault to find, no grievances to tell,
But, like tight shoes, they did not *fit* quite well.
The lady curt'sied, with "*Adieu, Monsieur,*"
The husband bow'd, or shrugg'd, "*de tout mon coeur!*"
"*L'affaire est faite;*" each partner free to range,
Made life a dance, and every dance a change.
In England's colder soil they scarce contrive
To keep these foreign freedom-plants alive;
Yet in some gay parterres we've seen, ev'n there,
Its blushing fruit this frail exotic bear;—
Couples make shift to slip the marriage chain,
Cross hands—cast off—and are themselves again.
(Bell rings.)
But, soft! I hear the Prompter's summons rung,
That calls me off, and stops my idle tongue;
A Sage, our fair and virtuous Author's friend,
Shakes his stern head, and bids my nonsense end;—
Bids me declare, she hopes her parent land
May long this current of the times withstand;
That here, in purity and honour bred,
Shall love and duty wreath the nuptial bed;

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The brave good husband, and his faithful wife,
Revere the sacred charities of life;
And bid their children, like their sires of old,
Firm, honest, upright, for their country bold,
Here, where "Rome's eagles found unvanquished foes,"
The Gallic vulture fearlessly oppose,
Chace from this favoured isle, with baffled wing,
Bless'd in its good old laws, old manners, and old King.

THE END.

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